

Christopher to start tour on Aug. 8

CAIRO (AFP) — U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher will start a new Middle East tour on Aug. 8 aimed at breaking the deadlock in the Israeli-Syrian peace talks, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak said Saturday. Egypt's Middle East News Agency said Mr. Mubarak was speaking after a brief visit to Saudi Arabia, where he discussed with King Fahd "the obstacles hampering the peace process, including the issue of Jerusalem." Mr. Mubarak said Syrian President Hafez Al Assad in Damascus last week was met by Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in the Egyptian border town of Taba later Sunday. Mr. Christopher would return to the region on Aug. 8 "to give a new push to the Syrian-Israeli track" of peace talks. "The president said Egypt was ready to try to overcome some of the obstacles... so as to push forward the process of a just, comprehensive and durable peace," it added. Mr. Mubarak and King Fahd discussed Jerusalem and Al Assad's role in the peace process. "The issue of Jerusalem will be settled through negotiations."

Gore to visit self-rule areas

GAZA (R) — United States Vice-President Al Gore will visit Israel and the Palestinian self-rule areas in September on the highest-level U.S. mission since 1986, Palestinian officials and U.S. diplomats said on Sunday. U.S. diplomats visited Gaza on Saturday to arrange the visit, due on Sept. 4, with the Palestinian National Authority. The officials said it was not yet decided if Mr. Gore would visit the Gaza Strip or Jericho. U.S. diplomats said he was also likely to make a short visit to Israel after attending a United Nations conference on population growth in Cairo.

Iraqi rebel chief warns oil firms

TEHRAN (AFP) — An Iraqi opposition leader has warned foreign oil companies against resuming activities in southern Iraq, saying those collaborating with Baghdad would not be spared rebel attacks. Ayatollah Mohammad Bagheri Hakim, the head of the Supreme Council of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI), said Saturday that rebels in Iraq were "determined to make southern Iraq into a hell for criminals and aggressors. Everyone should realise that those who want to be with the regime of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein would not be spared blows from the mujahideen," he said during a public meeting in the city of Qom in central Iran.

Kuwait crown prince visits S. Arabia

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwaiti Crown Prince and Prime Minister Sheikh Saad Al Abdullah Al Sabah left on Sunday for a visit to Saudi Arabia, the Kuwait News Agency reported. A statement by the heir apparent's office said he had flown to Jeddah but gave no details of his programme and did not say how long he would stay, the official agency said. Sheikh Saad was accompanied by Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and Planning Minister Abdul Aziz Al Dakhil and Kuwaiti Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Abdul Rahman Al Bakr.

Group claims attack on Minya policemen

CAIRO (AFP) — The outlawed Al Gamaa Al Islamiyya (Islamic Group) Sunday claimed responsibility for an ambush in southern Egypt which left three policemen wounded. In a statement received here the group said the attack on Thursday night was only "the beginning of a new stage of jihad (holy war) in Mallawi," a town in Minya province, some 200 kilometres south of Cairo. The policemen — two captains and one private — were walking through Minya when gunmen opened fire on them and then fled the scene. The statement said the assailants "confirm the Egyptian people and the jihad." The group also accused the authorities of murdering two Muslim fundamentalists — Ashraf Nagui and Ragab Abdul Hakim — probably a reference to a shootout with security forces in the troubled southern region of Assiut.

49% of Swiss favour EU entry

LAUSANNE (AFP) — Almost half of the Swiss population are in favour of joining the European Union (EU) according to a poll published in a Swiss magazine Sunday. Of the 1,003 people questioned in the poll for the magazine L'Hebdo, 49 per cent said they were in favour of Swiss EU membership. The result shows a four per cent increase on a poll published by the Swiss social research institute three months ago. That poll showed a 20 per cent swing in favour of EU membership since 1992.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية مستقلة سياسية تصدر عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية. الراي.

Volume 18 Number 5676

AMMAN MONDAY, AUGUST 1, 1994, SAFAR 23, 1415

Price: Jordan 150 Fils

Israel accepts 'certain requirements' with Syria

Mubarak and Rabin ponder means to break logjam in Israel-Syria talks

TABA, Egypt (Agencies) — Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, trying to draw Syria into a peace deal, said on Sunday Israel understood it would have to meet "certain requirements" to end nearly a half century of conflict. Mr. Rabin and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, their countries partners to a 1979 peace deal, spoke to reporters at the end of a nearly two-hour summit to discuss how Israel might clinch an agreement with Syria.

"Israel wants peace with Syria and we are ready to understand that there will be certain requirements for us," Mr. Rabin told reporters in the Egyptian Red Sea resort of Taba, just across the border from Israel.

Israeli-Syrian peace talks are stuck on the fate of the Golan Heights, seized by Israel in 1967. Syria demands a full withdrawal. Israel is willing to pull back but would not say how far until Syria commits itself to full relations. Mr. Rabin would not elaborate on the "requirements," and said he would not negotiate through the media the extent of a withdrawal that Israel envisaged in a peace deal.

Mr. Mubarak said Syrian President Hafez Al Assad would never sign a peace treaty with Israel unless the Jewish state withdrew completely from the Golan Heights. But the Egyptian leader said he believed Mr. Assad was more open to some of Israel's terms.

"My feeling (is) that he is much more flexible and he wants peace," Mr. Mubarak said.

Both leaders said U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, due in the region on Aug. 8, would play an important role bridging the Israeli-Syrian gap. Mr. Mubarak said he hoped for a settlement by year's end. "The point is the mistrust between both sides," Mr. Mubarak told reporters after seeing Mr. Rabin off. "I told you very frankly that Syria will never accept signing any peace or establishing it with Israel without complete withdrawal from the Golan."

"The prime minister wants to know what they are going to get in return," Mr. Mubarak said. "That's the point. That's the click. If I think that could be broken... I think there will be much more flexibility in the coming months."

Mr. Rabin, in a reference to Israeli agreements reached with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) in September and Jordan last week, said: "I hope that there will be a change as a result of what has happened with the Palestinians and the Jordanians on the Syrian side."

Mr. Rabin said: "Syria has to do something in its public diplomacy, in its public utterances, that will bring the people of Israel to be convinced that Syria is eager to have peace."

Syria and Lebanon, where Damascus acts as main powerbroker, are Israel's

only remaining frontline foes not to have concluded agreements with the Jewish state in nearly three years of peace talks begun in Madrid.

Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said on Saturday: "Assad had the possibility to be either first or last. And when he lost the option to be first, it seems to me that the option that interests him is to be last."

Mr. Mubarak, who called Mr. Rabin "the cornerstone in the peace process," sidestepped persistent questions by Israeli reporters as to when he would answer Mr. Rabin's two-year-old invitation to visit Israel, including occupied Jerusalem.

"I would like to go to Tel Aviv because Jerusalem is a problem," Mr. Mubarak admitted to reporters. Syria said Sunday it was not optimistic about the prospects for a comprehensive peace settlement in the Middle East, accusing Washington of allowing Israel too much room for manoeuvre.

Damascus Radio said the peace process was also endangered by Israeli threats to attack Lebanon in retaliation for bombings of Jewish targets in Buenos Aires and London, and called on the United States to prevent Israeli aggression.

Army Chief-of-Staff General Hikmat Shehadi told the government daily Tishrin there were "no grounds for optimism" about achieving a fair and comprehensive peace.

(Continued on page 7)

Israel and Arabs meet in Cairo on environment

CAIRO (R) — Delegates from 20 states including Israel and most of the Arab World said on Sunday they were close to drafting a code of conduct that would curb environmental aggressions in the Middle East.

"It has been agreed to make an outline on conserving the environment but we hope that in the future this moral environmental charter will turn into an executive one to punish the polluter and to cure the pollution," Jad Ishak from the Palestinian delegation told Reuters. Israeli delegate Zeev Ruria said: "There were lots of differences but there was a dialogue. The outcome of the meeting today is that we are about to draft a code of conduct which hopefully tomorrow morning will have the consensus of all the parties."

The two-day meeting, which opened in Cairo on Sunday, focused on outlining the nature of the environmental relations between the regional parties and on limiting environmental violations that pollute the region, the delegates added.

"The Middle East is full of environmental aggressions, for example, the Jordan River has become a mere passage for liquid wastes dumped by Israel," Mr. Ishak said.

He said environmental aggressions were embodied by the daily desertification of Israeli-occupied Palestinian land, overuse of arable land, abuse of its agricultural potential and uprooting trees.

One issue discussed was occupation and its impact on environment, mainly in the Israeli-occupied Arab territories.

"We mentioned all the en-

U.N. authorises invasion of Haiti

UNITED NATIONS (Agencies) — The Security Council on Sunday passed a resolution that clears the way for a possible U.S.-led invasion of Haiti to oust the military-backed government and restore the ousted President Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

The resolution authorised the use of force passed by a vote of 12-0. China and Brazil abstained. Rwanda was absent for the vote.

The resolution, which gives no timetable for the possible use of military force, "authorises member states to form a multinational force under unified command and control and... to use all necessary means to facilitate the departure from Haiti of the military leadership."

The resolution also calls for the deployment of a 6,000-member U.N. force after any invasion.

U.S. Ambassador Madeleine Albright said the resolution was a warning to Haiti's military-backed government that "if they are not going to leave soon and voluntarily they are going to leave soon and involuntarily."

But Ms. Albright, in answer to a question, contended an invasion was not inevitable: "I think we have provided ourselves with the tools in order to do the job that we deem necessary but we have a choice of tools. What we have done is provide the president with one more tool for action in Haiti."

Mr. Aristide, himself, cleared the way for a vote by sending a letter Friday calling for "swift and decisive action" against the military leaders who overthrew him in a September 1991 coup.

As Haiti's first democratically-elected leader, he was overthrown by the military after only seven months in office. The United Nations has repeatedly asked coup leaders, headed by General Raoul Cedras, to step down and leave the

country.

Mr. Aristide sent another letter to the council late Saturday, saying he hoped the resolution would be adopted because it "provides an appropriate framework for the implementation of the Governors Island agreement."

The Governors Island accord, signed in New York just over a year ago, called for the restoration of democracy, the return of Mr. Aristide to office and the resignation of the coup leaders who overthrew him. The military has ignored the accord.

The Security Council a year ago imposed a fuel embargo on Haiti and then in May clamped full trade sanctions on the Caribbean state. These have had a devastating impact on the impoverished nation.

The phrase "all necessary means" was the code word for military intervention and was used in the 1990 Gulf war resolution that permitted the U.S. forces to drive Iraqi troops out of Kuwait.

The resolution also: — Establishes a 6,000-member U.N. peacekeeping force to take over from the multinational intervention force when the Security Council certifies that a "secure and stable" environment has been created. The council will base its recommendations on the commander of the military intervention force as well as Secretary-General Boutros Ghali.

— Calls on the U.N. peacekeepers, known as the U.N. Mission in Haiti (UNMIH), to help train Haiti's armed forces, create a civilian police force and help organise free and fair elections, due late in 1995. The resolution gives the peacekeepers an initial mandate of six months and says they should complete their mission by February 1996.

The council temporarily had only 14 members since Rwanda vacated its seat

Regent calls on NRA to set up efficient information system

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Sunday urged the Natural Resources Authority (NRA) to maintain an effective information exchange system with various institutions as a way to help the country plan future projects, especially in exploiting the Kingdom's natural resources.

"To achieve this end, it is best to establish a national information system which can help the country foresee the needs for the future and accordingly endorse plans to meet them," the Regent said during a visit he paid to the NRA.

Addressing NRA staff in the presence of Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Talal Ureikat, the Crown Prince suggested organising a scientific week in Jordan to focus attention on natural resources like water and energy and the environment.

He praised Jordanian experts citing their success in utilising Jordan's potash, phosphate and fertilisers as an example of their capability and skill.



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, on Sunday addresses staff of the Natural Resources Authority (Petra photo)

Reflecting on the work of the NRA, Prince Hassan suggested the abolition of legislations that often conflict with each other and hinder the effective handling of issues related to the environment, energy and water and said that instead an integrated system should be introduced that would better

serve national interests and unify various institutions efforts in coordination with the NRA.

The Regent also suggested that work be shifted to the field and that the NRA management offer its staff incentives.

NRA Director General Fakhreddin Daghestani out-

lined the NRA's plans and activities, which include prospecting for oil and natural gas as well as mineral resources including oil shale, phosphate and potash.

The Regent toured the NRA offices and examined maps and information about natural resources in the Kingdom.

Tehran warns U.S. against attack

TEHRAN (Agencies) — A newspaper here warned the United States on Sunday against any attack on Iran in connection with the London and Buenos Aires bombings, saying it would endanger U.S. interests throughout the world.

"The leaders of the United States and its friends in the region should know that Iran is no Iraq or North Korea," said the daily Hamshahri, which supports the government.

"Any aggression against Iran would risk destabilising the interests of the aggressors throughout the world."

U.S. British and Israeli leaders have accused Iran of involvement in bomb attacks on Jewish interests in London and Buenos Aires.

Iran has strongly denied any role, offering to help combat international terrorism, and accused Israel and its Western backers of launching a new propaganda war against Tehran to discredit Islam.

A car bomb exploded outside a Jewish charity in London on Wednesday injuring

(Continued on page 7)

Israel besieges Lebanese village amid rising tension

BEIRUT (Agencies) — Israeli troops have been preventing food and medicines from reaching a village in South Lebanon since Tuesday, the Lebanese Red Cross (LRC) said in a statement issued here Sunday.

"Our emergency teams wanted to enter Yohmor in coordination with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to help the inhabitants, who have been under siege for six days, but they were prevented from doing so," the statement said.

Meanwhile, the Hizbollah group said its guerrillas carried out a bomb attack Sunday against pro-Israeli militiamen in South Lebanon. Yohmor, on the edge of Israel's "security zone," has been cut off since Tuesday by the Israeli army, which has erected an earth wall on the road linking it with areas controlled by the Lebanese army.

The LRC said it wanted to send in a convoy consisting of a mobile clinic, medicines and flour for the villagers, who were living in difficult conditions and running short of food.

Lebanese police said 180 Lebanese were trapped in Yohmor.

In March the Israeli army imposed a similar blockade on the village following an anti-Israeli attack.

The latest blockade followed attacks by Hizbollah guerrillas, who killed one Israeli soldier and wounded 13 in an area of the "security zone" near the village.

Hizbollah did not report any casualties in Sunday's attack on the South Lebanon Army (SLA).

It said its fighters "detonated a bomb as a patrol of Israeli agents passed by near Beit Yahun" in the "security zone."

Lebanese police confirmed the explosion without giving further details, and said artillery in the zone fired several shells in response.

Israel said late Friday it had withdrawn the military reinforcements it had sent into the zone at the start of the week.

Sources close to the SLA said Israel withdrew three artillery pieces, five Merkava tanks, four troop carriers and a mobile headquarters.

In Beirut, resistance forces vowed on Sunday to make northern Israel uninhabitable if Israeli forces attacked South Lebanon to avenge bombings of Jewish targets in Buenos Aires and London.

The pledge came after U.N. sources reported that about five per cent of South Lebanon's 300,000 residents had fled their homes after Israel threatened a "painful response" to guerrilla attacks.

"If they bombard South Lebanon, we will bombard settlements in northern Palestine," a pro-Iranian leader who requested anonymity told Reuters. "If they displace 300,000 Lebanese villagers, we will displace 150,000 villagers."

The Israeli side of the border is far less populated than South Lebanon.

A year ago, Israel, which invaded Lebanon in 1982 to drive out Palestinian guerrillas, launched a week-long assault on the south and guerrillas there. The operation killed about 150 people, mainly civilians, destroyed thousands of homes and caused some 300,000 people to flee intense shelling.

A U.N. peacekeeping source said on Sunday 15,000 people had fled southern Lebanon fearing an imminent Israeli strike.

Security sources said the exodus was midweek. No movement of people from the

(Continued on page 7)

Sanaa: Geneva talks no reconciliation bid

ADEN (Agencies) — The Yemeni government, in a fresh snub to U.N. efforts to promote post-civil war reconciliation, has said a meeting in Geneva last week did not constitute talks with its defeated southern rivals.

The official news agency SABA quoted an official source as saying late on Saturday that Sanaa government envoys went to the meeting simply to advise U.N. troubleshooter Lakhdar Brahimi of the content of a government statement.

"Dialogue on the future between all Yemeni political forces is a strictly Yemeni affair," the source said.

Thursday's Geneva talks were held a day after the Sanaa cabinet said in a statement it had asked the United Nations to end its involvement in Yemen because the civil war had ended. It also insisted any talks should be held in Yemen.

The government newspaper Al Jomhuriyah, in a commentary on Sunday, reiterated the official position. "Anyone who wants to speculate on the Yemeni dialogue must realise that this dialogue, as the official

source made clear yesterday, is an affair that concerns Yemen alone," it said.

The meeting was the first north-south encounter since the end of the two-month civil war on July 2, when the army of President Ali Abdullah Saleh captured the southerners' bastion of Aden and defeated at the same time their attempt to secede.

Sanaa on Wednesday said the Yemeni file at the U.N. Security Council should be "closed" and that internal dialogue should take place inside Yemen in order to "prevent any external influence."

The Security Council voted in June two resolutions on Yemen, calling on the warring factions to cease fire and resume dialogue.

After the fall of Aden, southern leaders who proclaimed the south independent on May 20, fled the country.

Mr. Ibrahim said after the meeting that representatives of the Sanaa government and its defeated secessionist foes held three hours of talks and agreed to pursue a "political dialogue."

Saying he was speaking on behalf of the two delegations, he told reporters the meeting around a table at U.N. European headquarters had been held "in a good atmosphere."

SABA quoted the source as saying Haidar Abu Bakr Al Attas, prime minister of the breakaway southern state that collapsed on July 8, had attended the Geneva talks at Mr. Ibrahim's request.

Mr. Attas is among 16 southerners Sanaa declared traitors and put on a black list of people it would not deal with.

Mr. Ibrahim said on Thursday the two sides, led by Yemeni Planning Minister Abdul Karim Al Iryani for Sanaa and Mr. Attas for the southerners, would maintain contact with him to fix a date and venue for a further encounter.

Al Jomhuriyah also criticised "certain Arab news organisations" for "dishonest" coverage of the Geneva talks in presenting them as north-south dialogue. "No one has the right to speak about the context of this dialogue outside the realm of constitutional legality," the newspaper said.

Saleh wants to try rivals

YEMENI PRESIDENT Ali Abdullah Saleh on Sunday said he wanted neighbouring Oman and Saudi Arabia to hand over southern breakaway leaders so they could be judged for "war crimes," the official news agency SABA reported.

"Our country is in the process of asking foreign countries to hand over a certain number of criminals on the run, in order to judge them as war criminals in Yemen," Mr. Saleh, a northerner, said in a speech in Taiz.

He named leaders of the "Yemeni democratic republic" declared in southern Yemen on May 20, notably its "president," Ali Salem Al Beidh, "vice-president," Abdul Rahman Al Jifri, "prime minister," Abu Bakr Al Attas, and "defence minister," Haitham Qassem Al Taher.

Mr. Saleh warned that those included in the amnesty "have 15 days to return to the country as from today," or else "face constitutional and legal measures."

JD 31m EIB loans to help TCC expansion, water network repair

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The European Union is extending about JD 31 million to finance telecommunications and water projects in Jordan through the European Investment Bank (EIB) at concessional rates, it was announced here Sunday.

A press release from the European Commission, the executive arm of the EU, said 25 million European currency units (ECUs), or JD 21 million, were being lent for expanding international telephone links to outlying regions and installation of new links with the West Bank and Lebanon and with other neighbouring countries.

Another loan, of 12 million ECUs (around JD 10 million), is for the Water Authority of Jordan (WAJ) for an environmental improvement scheme involving rehabilitation of water supply systems serving Salt. The loan will also have a two per cent interest subsidy from the European Commission's budget.

The European Commission has signed four cooperation protocols with Jordan under a broader accord reached between the 12-member European Union

and Jordan. The European Commission is the executive arm of the union and administers EU assistance to countries separate from bilateral agreements reached between EU member countries and recipients.

The fourth protocol, which covers 1992-96 provides for a total of 126 million ECUs (JD 115.5 million); 80 million ECUs (JD 67.04 million) will be in the form of EIB loans, 44 million ECUs (JD 36.97 million) in grants and two million ECUs (JD 1.676 million) in contribution to risk capital help for entrepreneurs. About 34 million ECUs (\$29.22 million) have already been allocated for the rehabilitation of the Amman-Aqaba desert highway.

The commission and the government last week signed an accord under which Jordan would get JD 9 million — most of it as grant — for water-related projects.

The latest EIB loans for telecommunications will help Jordan's current five-year programme to expand the telephone network and double capacity (280,000 lines). It follows on from an initial loan of ECU 20 million from the EIB, advanced in November 1993, to increase switching capacity at several regional exchanges and boost

international telecommunications connections with Egypt and Syria, and then Europe. The works financed are being undertaken by the Telecommunications Corporation (TCC).

The switching equipment, serving about 20 areas, is due to be installed by 1996, and the works to lay 70 fibre-optic cables (some providing links with Jericho), establish 13 microwave links (including some to Lebanon) and connect up new lines are scheduled for completion in 1998, the commission said.

"Given the joint benefits of this investment scheme for the countries in the area and for the community, particularly in view of the peace process under way in the Middle East, these funds are being advanced under EC-Mediterranean 'horizontal financial cooperation' agreements," the press release said.

The ECU 12 million to the WAJ for the Salt environmental improvement scheme, is made available under the fourth EC-Jordan protocol. The project centres on renovation of the town's water distribution and sewerage networks, which date from the 1940s and which serve a rapidly expanding population now numbering some 67,500.

The works involve laying of some 440 kilometres of water supply pipes, construction of eight reservoirs and eight pumping stations, fitting of 20,000 water metres and installation of 12 kilometres of sewers.

"The aim is to cut down considerably on losses in the system, currently estimated at one million cubic metres of drinking water a year, to protect groundwater resources by reducing wastewater infiltration and over-irrigation, to improve the quality of the water supplied and the service provided and to increase the volume of revenue received."

This is the fifth operation concluded between the EIB and the WAJ, the press release said.

Modernisation of Salt's water management systems forms part of the measures being undertaken by the government towards rational use and conservation of the country's water resources, measures which have been attracting EIB support for several years, with loans for water management schemes in the towns of Zarqa, Irbid and Ramtha, a project to raise the height of the Kafra dam and rehabilitation of King Abdullah canal, it said.

Princess Basma announces final document for World Conference on Women in 1995

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Her Royal Highness Princess Basma Sunday announced that the national document to be presented at the Fourth World Conference on Women has been finalised.

In a joint press conference with the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), Princess Basma handed the document to ESCWA Deputy Executive Secretary Thoraya Obaid and Chief of the Women and Development Section at ESCWA Fatima Shaita Kasseem.

At the press conference, held at the Queen Alia Fund for Social Development (QAF), the Princess said that the document presents the status of the Jordanian women in the 1980s, and recommendations for improving that status and the Jordanian woman's standard of living.

"We are concentrating on conducting workshops and working on developing the existing documents, and based on it, we will be able to set

out priorities," Princess Basma said.

The Princess, who will head the Kingdom's delegation to the Beijing conference, said her only concern is that the recommendations of the document be implemented in the future and not simply remain ink on paper.

"It is not enough if we conduct workshops and lectures, we need to put our hands together, especially women's organisations, and concentrate on improving women's status, particularly in urban areas," the Princess said.

Responding to questions, Ms. Obaid said Jordan was the first country in the region to submit its finalised document, adding that based on this document and the others submitted by countries of the region, ESCWA will submit a report on women's status to be adopted at an expert group meeting on the regional plan of action for Arab women to be held in Amman on Nov. 8. This meeting will be immediately followed on Nov. 9-10 by the inter-

governmental regional preparatory meeting for the Fourth World Conference on Women.

While the document noted that Jordanian women have been particularly fortunate in seeing improvement in their condition, it cited some shortcomings including providing a mechanism and programmes aimed at consolidating the progress achieved by women, women's poverty and unemployment, limited participation of women in the formulation of economic policy, and increasing violence against women. It said the effects of war also led to negative consequences on the lives of women in Jordan, as has the lack of or non-enforcement of laws that protect women's rights.

"It is a long and hard procedure to try and change the current legislation in order to match with today's woman's life," Princess Basma said.

The official document suggested a plan of work to enhance the condition of women in the future. It included raising women's

awareness of their legal rights and obligations, promoting the participation of women in the various forms of political life, encouraging the participation of women in economic activity and their contribution in the labour force, strengthening the role of women in society and boosting their social status, developing health services, improving the role of media in the services of women's issues and strengthening the participation of women in the preparation of plans and programmes relating to the environment.

ESCWA and the National Committee for Women, are working as a part of the various national and regional activities aimed at finalising Jordan's national plan of action, which will culminate in a regional platform.

After adoption by ESCWA states, the regional platform of action will be submitted to the secretary-general of the conference in New York, to be used as input in the formulation of a global platform of action to be presented at the Beijing conference.

Palestine People's Party praises Jordan, urges PLO leaders to follow its example

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Palestine People's (communist) Party (PPD) has praised Jordan's success in its negotiations with Israel and urged the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) leadership to follow Jordan's approach to ensure the rights of the Palestinian people.

"Jordan, through persistent efforts, has succeeded in attaining the objectives it had defined for itself since the start of the Madrid conference," said the party's daily, Al Ta'aa, which is published in Arab Jerusalem.

The Washington Declaration is to be regarded as

favouring the Jordanian stand because it provided for the restoration of Jordanian territory and water resources as originally demanded by the Kingdom," it said in an analysis Sunday.

The paper quoted Israeli officials as saying in the wake of the signing of the Washington Declaration that Jordan had stood firm on its objectives and attained them "unlike the Palestinians whose negotiations with the Israelis were not so successful."

"The Palestinian leadership should take stock of what happened and reconsider its position to find out the

real reasons for Jordan's success and the reason for the Palestinian's failure," the paper quoted the Israeli officials as saying.

The paper said the Israelis "were jubilant in their success of removing the psychological barrier with Jordan but they overlooked some aspects resulting from that success."

"The most significant element overlooked here," said the paper, "was the collapse of the so-called 'Israeli security theory' which was behind Israel's commitment to settlements built along the Jordan Valley as a security boundary

on the eastern front.

"Israel has no more justification for holding on to this old concept since, with peace with Jordan it becomes obsolete and the old theory conflicts with sound logic."

It also quoted the Israeli officials as saying that the Washington Declaration opens the door wide for the Palestinians to pursue negotiations with Israel to expand the Jericho self-rule area to extend as far as the River Jordan and to demand the dismantling of the Jewish settlements along the length of the Jordan Valley since peace is coming to the region.

Leading Likud figure says party should accept self-rule deal

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — A leading Israeli right-wing politician said Sunday his party should accept the Gaza-Jericho autonomy accord with the Palestinians.

Moshé Katzav, the head of the Likud parliamentary faction, said the accord handing the Gaza Strip and Jericho over to Palestinian self-rule was painful, but was already done.

"What happened has happened," Mr. Katzav told Israeli army radio. "If we come to power, we shouldn't say we will invade Gaza. But that we will honour the international agreements."

"We should accept the changes on the ground, reorganise ourselves. We have to accept the new status in Gaza and consider it irreversible," said Mr. Katzav.

"The Likud, if it returns to power, will have to recognise the international commitments given by the previous government, including the Oslo accords," he told Israeli Radio.

"I am ready to talk to any Palestinian, but only about

autonomy because we have to avoid the creation of a Palestinian state at all costs," said Mr. Katzav, who was transport minister in the last Likud government.

Mr. Katzav told the Yediot Aharanot newspaper he was even ready to meet Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat, who is usually referred to by the Likud party as a "terrorist."

"The Likud could join a government of national unity with Labour if the prime minister commits himself to avoiding the creation of a Palestinian state," Mr. Katzav told the daily.

The Likud, with 32 members in the 120-seat parliament, totally rejected the autonomy agreement with the PLO but has welcomed the end of a state of war and start of peace negotiations with Jordan in the last two weeks.

The Likud and other smaller right-wing parties object to giving to any territories for peace. But giving up the Gaza Strip was widely popular in Israel, with most males

Environmentalists protest site of Wadi Araba talks

EILAT (AP) — Israel's nature reserves authority objects to use of a desert nature reserve along the Israeli-Jordanian border as the site of peace talks and possibly a future border crossing. Officials said Saturday.

Roni Malka, the authority's director in the region of the Red Sea resort of Eilat, said peace talks at the nature reserve straddling the border in Wadi Araba are causing "irreversible damage to the ecosystem of desert animals and plants."

Israeli and Jordanian armed forces turned the placid moonscape into a bustling tent town this month to accommodate the hundreds of officials and journalists that arrived in cars and buses for the talks.

Mr. Malka said he was especially alarmed at tentative plans to establish a permanent border crossing at the site, within the 16-square-kilometre reserve just north of Eilat.

"We will not allow them to build a crossing in the middle of the reserve. Let them go a few kilometres north or south," he said.

Jordan to observe breastfeeding week

AMMAN — Jordan will observe World Breastfeeding Week between Aug. 1 and 7 with this year's theme being "The International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes."

The code seeks to encourage and protect breastfeeding by regulating marketing practices used to sell products for artificial infant nursing.

The health ministry, acting in conjunction with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), is organising several activities in Jordan aimed at protecting and encouraging the breastfeeding of infants.

Health Minister Aref Bataineh will attend a special ceremony at the Amman Marriott Hotel on Aug. 3 where he will deliver an address on the aims of World Breastfeeding Week.

UNICEF said that the objective of the week's activities is to raise awareness about the international code, its purpose and its potential, to encourage governments to introduce national rules and regulations using the code as a minimum standard and to stimulate public interest groups, professional organisations and the general public to monitor the enforcement of the code.

According to UNICEF the

Pharmacy conference stresses on advances

AMMAN — Minister of Higher Education Rabea Saoud Sunday opened the International Conference on Pharmaceutical Products and Drug Development Processes, praising the achievements of Jordan's growing pharmaceutical industry and stressing the importance of such advances in working towards a disease-free society.

Held at the Applied Sciences University in cooperation with the Higher Council of Science and Technology (HCST), the two-day meeting groups Arab scientific technicians from the region and abroad.

Dr. Saoud said all national and international scientific, cultural and social activities interact to drive all efforts towards success, making it possible for the Arab World to achieve levels on par with the developed countries.

Representing the Higher Council for Science and Technology, Khaled Shreida outlined the council's main objectives concerning laying the scientific basis for science and technology and encouraging research to help local industry.

The first session included the presentation of four papers: "Approaches to Drug Discovery and Drug Design," by Yusuf Abdul Hajj, professor of medical chemistry at the University of Minnesota; "The Path to Successful Development of Solid Dosage Forms," by Laman Al Razzaz, manager of formulation development of Abbott Labs; "Quality Assurance in Pharmaceutical Industry," by Ibrahim Jalal; and "Recent Challenges for the U.S. Pharmaceutical Industry," by Musa Ghanam, of Merck Co.

The second session included another four papers: "New Drug Development," by Patrick Marroum of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA); "New Drug Development: Clinical and Bioavailability Studies," by Walid Awani; "Clinical Studies: Industrial Perspectives," by Asma Ghanam of Merck Co., and a "Radioprotective Agency," by Zuhair Mubieleen of the Faculty of Pharmacy and Medical Technology of the Jordan University for Women.

Delegates participating represent Arab, American, and European companies and scientific institutes, in addition to other Jordanian specialists from the pharmaceutical industry.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

17:00 ... Pif El Hercule
17:10 ... Beaumanoir
17:30 ... Musique Sans Frontiers
18:30 ... News in French
18:45 ... The Weekly Sports Magazine
19:00 ... News in Hebrew
19:15 ... "Get to know Your Body"
19:30 ... Black Beauty
20:00 ... News in Arabic
20:30 ... My Big Brother
21:30 ... A Galactic Odyssey
22:00 ... News in English
22:30 ... Matrix
23:00 ... No Job For A Lady

PRAYER TIMES

04:17 ... Fair
05:45 ... (Sunrise) Dhuhr
12:42 ... Dhuhr
16:23 ... 'Asr
19:39 ... Maghrib
21:08 ... 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Sediliah. Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590.

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440.

De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terrence Church Tel. 623366
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541
Anglican Church Tel. 630851, Tel. 628543
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 711331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751
Armenian International Church Tel. 625326
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 624328
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 664195
The Lutheran Church Tel. 654932
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675591
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

Fine weather conditions will prevail with clouds appearing at low altitudes and winds westerly moderate to active. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

Min./Max. temp. Amman 18 / 27

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Aqaba 24 / 37
Dorcas 16 / 29
Jordan Valley 25 / 36

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 27, Aqaba 42 Humidity
readings: Amman 36 per cent,
Aqaba 30 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Basim Oudmani 648633
Dr. Youssef Naser 751144
Dr. Youssef Faqih 756988
Dr. Abdul Hadi Tayim 620115
Firas pharmacy 661912
Firdous pharmacy 776336
Al Asma pharmacy 637055
Nairook pharmacy 623672
Al Salam pharmacy 636750
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shmeisat pharmacy 637640
Nairook pharmacy 623672
Najib pharmacy 676532

IBRID:
Dr. Akram Momani 248794
Aljoudi pharmacy (-)

ZARQA:
Dr. Muftid Dhamra 985522

Khalifeh pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate 630341
Rescue 199
Civil Defence Emergency 637777
Fire Brigade 617101
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896399
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints 605800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage 897467
Amman Municipality 787111
Complaints 637111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 610230
Central Amman Telephone Repairs 633101
Aqaba Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority (directory assistance) 636381
Electric Power Company 636381
RJ Flight Information 08-53200
Al Aqaba Int. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 81381/332
Khalid Maternity, J. Amn 642241/6
Akilch Maternity, J. Amn. 642241/6

Jabal Amman Maternity 642342
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shmeisat 664171/4
Shmeisat Hospital 669131
University Hospital 843402
Al-Muasher Hospital 66727/97
The Islamic, Aqaba 666127/37
Al-Ahli, Aqaba 664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhajir 77101/3
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 775111/26
Army, Marka 891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50
Amal Hospital 674155

ZARQA:
Zarqa Gov. Hospital (09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital (09)983323

Ibn Sina Hospital (09)986732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital (09)989990

IBRID:
Princess Basma Hospital (02)273555
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272725
The Al Nadees Hospital (02)247100

AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
09:00 Damascus (RJ)
09:30 Jordan (RJ)
09:30 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
10:15 Riyadh (RJ)
11:00 Beirut (RJ)
11:00 New Delhi (RJ)
12:30 Cairo (RJ)
12:30 Rhodes (add) (RJ)
19:00 Bangkok (RJ)
19:00 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
19:20 Sanaa (add) (RJ)
22:40 Casablanca, Tunis (RJ)
06:45 Moscow (RJ)
02:15 Madrid, Damascus (add) (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

11:00 Khartoum (SD)
13:30 Muscat, Abu Dhabi (OF)
15:00 Sanaa (YI)
17:00 Rome (AZ)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

06:45 Beirut (RJ)
12:00 Sanaa (add) (RJ)
12:00 Madrid (add) (RJ)
12:30 Amsterdam, Chicago (RJ)
13:00 Rhodes (add) (RJ)
13:15 Frankfurt, Copenhagen (RJ)
13:45 Cairo (RJ)
14:35 Moscow (RJ)
21:00 Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
21:00 Dhahran (RJ)
22:30 Al Ain, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
23:15 Cairo (RJ)
23:30 Rhodes (add) (RJ)
23:30 Damascus (RJ)
23:30 Amsterdam, Chicago (add) (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

06:00 Istanbul (TK)
09:15 Beirut (ME)
12:00 Khartoum (SD)
14:30 Bahrain, Abu Dhabi, Muscat (GF)
16:00 Sanaa (YI)
21:15 Sanaa (YI)
22:30 Dubai (EM)
02:30 Amsterdam (KL)

HIJAZ RAILWAY TRAIN

Dep. Amman 8:00 every Monday

Arr. Damascus 5:00 p.m. every Monday

Dep. Damascus 7:30 a.m. every Sunday

Arr. Amman 5:00 p.m. every Sunday

MARKET PRICES

Apple 600 / 400
Banana 620
Banana (Mukammal) 680
Cabbage 130 / 70
Carrot 180 / 100
Cauliflower 250 / 170
Cucumbers (large) 150 / 100
Cucumbers (small) 240 / 120
Eggplant 180 / 100
Figs 450 / 250
Garlic 850 / 550
Grapes 340 / 240
Lemon 420 / 280
Marrow (large) 180 / 100
Marrow (small) 300 / 200
Mulukhiyah 150 / 80
Okra 100 / 50
Orange 500 / 300
Onion (dry) 250 / 200
Sweet Melon 220 / 180
Pepper (hot) 250 / 150
Pepper (sweet) 250 / 150
Potato 400 / 250
Pumpkin 600 / 400
Tomato 110 / 50
String beans 400 / 300
Watermelon 130 / 80

document
in 1995

Vietnamese rice back on market

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The ministry has resumed the supply of Vietnamese long-grain rice to the market after laboratory tests established that the rice contained no toxic substance, a ministry official said Sunday.

In an obvious bid to avoid public complaints over the same type of rice, the Ministry of Supply has also changed the specifications in the latest tender for 15,000 tonnes.

"Laboratory tests have found that the long-grain rice had no toxic contents or any other impurities," said a spokesman for the Ministry

of Supply. "The rice is back in the market."

Jordan received a 15,000-tonne consignment of Vietnamese rice two months ago and the commodity was immediately sent to the market. However, the sale was temporarily halted when home-makers started an uproar over what they saw as the inferior quality of the rice, saying it took longer and a larger quantity of water and oil to be cooked well.

Suggestions were also raised that the rice was contaminated, leading the ministry to conduct specialised laboratory tests.

Rice from Thailand and Vietnam are the cheapest in the international market, but

it was the first time in many years that the Ministry of Supply had imported Vietnamese rice. The ex-Soviet Union was the major importer of Vietnamese rice.

Exports say Vietnamese rice is of good quality, but Jordanian consumers are not used to its peculiarities, and hence the suggestion that it is of inferior quality. This view is not shared by home-makers.

Obviously mindful of the problem, the Ministry of Supply has changed the specifications in its latest tender for rice. It now says "medium-grain rice" instead of "long-grain rice;" medium-grain rice is not available in the Far East. Its

main sources are Italy, Spain, Australia, India and the United States.

Korea produces "medium-grain rice," but not enough to export it.

The ministry has twice put off the latest tender for 15,000 tonnes.

The Ministry of Supply has a monopoly over imports of standard rice while the private sector is free to bring in higher quality rice whose prices are not controlled by the government.

The ministry, which imports about 100,000 tonnes of standard rice every year, supplies part of it at subsidised prices under a coupon system, and the rest of it at controlled prices.

Ministry sets new rice prices

AMMAN (Petra) — A tonne of long-grain rice imported by the Ministry of Supply will be sold for JD 300 and JD 308 to wholesalers and retailers respectively, according to a decision taken by Supp-

ly Minister Adel Qudah. Under the decision, medium-grain rice will be sold for JD 360 and 368 to wholesalers and retailers respectively. A kilogramme of long-grain rice will be sold to

the public for 320 fils and a kilogramme of medium-grain rice will be sold for 380 fils, according to the decision.

A tonne of subsidised rice sold to the public through coupons issued

by the Ministry of Supply will be sold for JD 150 and JD 158 respectively, and a kilogramme of such subsidised rice will be sold for 170 fils. The new prices take effect retroactively to July 24.

Street-side at the Jerash Festival

By Angham Tamimi

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Among the festivities held during the Jerash Festival of Culture and Arts are the nightly street shows at the Forum.

The Amazing Herbets of Britain performed comic shows with magic, unicycle stunts, clowning with stunts, juggling acrobatics and flying parachutes.

"Involving the audience is a main part of our performance," Keith Wynne told the Jordan Times. "Our shows are aimed at children and adults, so we make balloons and animals for children, and play other games to entertain adults."

Martin Culf is a mechanical engineer, but he likes to entertain people as well doing daredevil stunts on a metal ladder.

These "zany idiots," as they refer to themselves, have performed in different parts of the world. They were part of the entertainment at the wedding of Prince Charles and Princess Diana of England.

Jugnu Bhangra, another group of street entertainers performed traditional folk dances of their native northern India.

The troupe is comprised of 17 Sikhs who performed Punjabi folk dances, complemented by other dances fusing modern disco rhythms with athletic original dance steps. In addition, they presented other dances depicting courtship games and impressions of creatures such as the peacock and two-headed snake.

"Jugnu means firefly," 22-year-old Sukhvinder Majhail (Sukhy) told the Jordan Times. "It is chosen

to symbolise the group's ability to shine at night. And 'Bhangra' refers to a harvest dance demonstrating the sowing of seeds, weeding, hoeing, cutting wheat, thrashing, bagging, ox-cart journeys to market and then a celebration after selling the crops. This dance, originating from northwest India — Punjab, is primarily religious."

The group, formed in 1971, dances to the accompaniment of a dhol, a large, barrel-shaped two-sided drum. One end provides a tight treble and the other a deep base sound. Other instruments included: chimpanza, two forked strips of metal with discs on either side; shukka, a wooden slatted clapper; khatto, a rhythmic instrument shaped like a bird on a stick perch; and algozi, a twin flute.

A singer led the 12 dancers with a combination of folk and religious songs and shouts of encouragement.

"Four years ago we started disco dancing. We mixed traditional Indian and pop music to originate a new style of modern Bhangra dancing we called disco Bhangra," said Mr. Sukhy.

The group won many competitions in England and abroad.

"They are the best disco champions in the South of England," said Mr. Wynne of the Amazing Herbets.

All of the Bhangra members are students, performing at weddings and other social festivities to earn their living, said Mr. Sukhy.

Mr. Sukhy was proud talking about the "demo-



cratic society" of the nearly 80 member group. "We have a president who 20 years ago established the Jugnu Bhangra. He danced at India College and came to England and started the Jugnu. We also have a chairman, a manager and

biweekly meetings." Although all the Jugnu Bhangra members were born and raised in England, they appreciate their own culture and maintain a strong link to it through their dedication to its riches.

thefts

said Sunday.

According to the report, N.A.N. suffered a five-centimetre wound in the neck after he placed his head under an electric saw in a shop in Zarqa, and turned the machine on.

The owner of the shop told police that he had gone to pray in the loft. A few minutes later he heard the machine running then heard something fall to the floor.

The shopowner, who was not identified, said he took the victim to hospital.

The victim's sister said he rother suffered from mental illness and that he was homeless.

conference
advances

Tamimi

Jordan Times

Drug Discovery and Drug Design," by Yusuf Abul-Hajj, professor of medicinal chemistry at the University of Minnesota; "The Path to Successful Development of Solid Dosage Forms," by Laman Al-Razzaz, manager of formulation development of Abbott Labs; "Quality Assurance in Pharmaceutical Industry," by Ibrahim Jalal; and "Recent Challenges for the U.S. Pharmaceutical Industry," by Mustapha Chaham, of Merck Co.

The second session included another four papers: "New Drug Development," by Patrick Mahon of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA); "New Drug Development: Clinical and Bioavailability Studies," by Khalid Awani; "Clinical Studies: Industrial Perspectives," by Asma Ghannam; "Merck Co. and Radioprotective Agents," by Zuhair Al-Mutairi, dean of the Faculty of Pharmacy and Medical Technology of the Jordan University for Women. Today's two sessions will include 12 papers. Delegates participating represent Arab, American, and European companies and scientific institutes, in addition to other Jordanian specialists from the pharmaceutical industry.

JAZZ RAILWAY

TRAIN

Amman 8:00 every Monday

Damascus 5:30 p.m. every Monday

Damascus 7:30 a.m. every Sunday

Amman 5:00 p.m. every Sunday

MARKET PRICES

le 400 / 400

ma 400 / 400

ma (Mukannar) 400 / 400

age 400 / 400

flower 400 / 400

umbers (large) 400 / 400

umbers (small) 400 / 400

plant 400 / 400

400 / 400

400 / 400

400 / 400

400 / 400

400 / 400

400 / 400

400 / 400

400 / 400

400 / 400

400 / 400

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

JERASH FESTIVAL

- ★ Concert by Qatari singer Ali Abdul Sattar at the South Theatre at 20:30.
- ★ Concert by Dead Sea Fishing Club at the Artemis Theatre at 19:00.
- ★ Monodrama: "Anthology of Martyrdom and Exile" at the Artemis Theatre at 21:30.
- ★ Children's play: "Long Live the Dead Sea" at the Sound and Light Theatre at 8:00 p.m.
- ★ Musical performance at the Garasia Theatre at 19:30.
- ★ Play entitled "You Are Not You" at the Garasia Theatre at 20:30.

LECTURE

- ★ Lecture in Arabic entitled: "The Peace Process and the Palestinian Rights" by Dr. Mohammad Rabi' at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation in Jabal Amman at 6:30 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

- ★ Jordan Industries Expo at the International Motor Exhibition (Tel. 653854).
- ★ Exhibition entitled "Environmental Technologies: A Travelling Information Centre" at the American Center.
- ★ Exhibition of paintings by Jordanian and Iraqi artists at Orhali Art Gallery in Unam Uthaina (Tel. 826932).
- ★ "A one-painting exhibition" (about 15-metre long which took two years to complete) by Marwan Al Allan at the Phoenix Gallery for Culture and Art (Tel. 695291).
- ★ Exhibition of Arabic calligraphy at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- ★ Exhibition entitled "Arab Artists in France" at the Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts, Jabal Lawzeh, off Al Mustazah Circle (Tel. 630126).

ARAB BANK

Announces the opening of a new branch at

TAFILEH

Banking services start on Monday 1 August 1994

ARAB BANK / TAFILEH

B.O.Box 147 Tafilah, King Hussein Street.

Tel : (03)343534 / (03)343535, Fax : (03) 343536

Arab Bank General Management, Shmeisani-Amman, P.O.Box 950544-5, Tel: 607115, 660131, Telex: 23091 Arabnk Jo, Fax: 606793

If you're looking for the beat...

Milosevic urges Bosnian Serbs to accept peace plan

SARAJEVO (R) — Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic, reacting to a call by major powers for tighter sanctions on his country, urged Bosnia's Serbs Sunday to accept the latest international peace plan.

In a strongly worded statement to the Belgrade newspaper Politika, clearly aimed at the Bosnian Serb leadership, he said peace was in the interest of all Serbs and the plan must be accepted.

Mr. Milosevic's backing for the peace proposals followed a decision in Geneva by foreign ministers from the United States, Russia and European Union countries to call for tighter sanctions against the Bosnian Serbs.

Mr. Milosevic said the plan was a bid to force the Bosnian Serbs to reconsider their rejection.

After Saturday's decision, Bosnian Serbs flouted a U.N.-mandated no-weapons zone in Gorazde by opening fire with a 40-mm cannon and battling the Muslim-led Bosnian army in Sarajevo in one of the heaviest firefights in weeks in the Bosnian capital.

But no fresh clashes were reported Sunday morning.

Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev was due in Belgrade Sunday to meet Mr. Milosevic. Mr. Kozyrev was expected to try yet again to persuade Mr. Milosevic, long-time patron of the Bosnian Serbs, to put pressure on them to agree to the peace plan.

Mr. Milosevic pre-empted Mr. Kozyrev by telling the Bosnian Serbs they had no right to reject peace and saddle Serbia and Montenegro with sanctions.

He said of the peace plan:

"It is not entirely just as far as the Serb side is concerned... but without doubt a compromise is necessary, peace is more just than war and life and wisdom must prevail over death and incessant destruction."

Mr. Milosevic added: "Giving half of the (Bosnian) territory to the Bosnian Serbs and the other to the Muslim-Croat federation cannot be qualified as anti-Serb."

The Bosnian Serbs have reacted to the Geneva decision by saying they may cut off negotiations with the "contact group" — the United States, Russia, Britain, France and Germany — which drew up the peace plan.

Ministers from the five nations stopped short of calling for punitive military measures to force Serb compliance with the plan and left Serb leaders an opening to pursue further negotiations.

The Geneva meeting told the Serbs if they persisted in their intransigence the arms embargo against Muslim-led forces would be lifted.

"We are not prepared to see the process strung out indefinitely. We cannot continue this situation where the victims are punished by the arms embargo and are denied the right to defend themselves," U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher told a news conference.

Although the ministers tried to present a united front, they remained divided over the Bosnian problem.

Mr. Kozyrev, who had tried and failed to exploit Slavic ties to persuade Serbs to accept the deal, complained before the meeting

that he had been betrayed by the Bosnian Serbs.

But he lobbied his U.S. and European counterparts to refrain from taking major punitive action.

The Muslim-Croat alliance said it continued to support the peace plan but Bosnia's Muslim President Alija Izetbegovic criticised the result of the Geneva meeting.

"My impression of the decision is that the formulation is a little bit softer than we expected, a bit lower than we expected. I could not say I was completely satisfied with what happened in Geneva," Mr. Izetbegovic told Bosnian State Television.

In Sarajevo Saturday snipers cracked around the Holiday Inn and smoke rose near the nearby hillside of the Jewish cemetery in a heavy exchange that lasted more than an hour.

Snipers also wounded two tram passengers Saturday and forced the virtual closure of tram routes in the city for the second day running.

In eastern Bosnia, Serb forces fired a 40-mm cannon at Bosnian army positions southwest of Gorazde, in violation of a U.N. zone barring heavy weapons. They also opened fire with small arms on U.N. observation posts, said U.N. military spokesman Major Dacre Holloway.

Britain said Sunday it feared U.N. peacekeeping forces were being targeted by factions in Bosnia, increasing pressure for them to be withdrawn and for the international arms embargo to be lifted.

Defence Secretary Mal-

colm Rifkind said Britain wanted the United Nations troops to stay in Bosnia but feared their position was being made untenable by continued sniping and a reluctance to embrace peace proposals.

"Our main concern clearly is the safety of our troops on the ground," Mr. Rifkind said of the more than 2,200 British troops on duty in the former Yugoslavia. One British soldier died last week after an attack on a U.N. convoy near Sarajevo.

Mr. Rifkind told British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) Television there was evidence that Bosnian Serbs and possibly other factions were now targeting U.N. troops.

"What may be changing is whether the Serbs but also some of the other factions are deliberately targeting the U.N.," Mr. Rifkind said. "That would be totally unacceptable and would be incompatible with their continuing presence in Bosnia."

Mr. Rifkind said Britain did not want to see an easing of the arms embargo on the former Yugoslavia but was unlikely to stand in the way if pressure built for it to be lifted after the latest rejection of peace overtures by Bosnian Serbs.

"There is no possibility of the United Kingdom changing its view that the lifting of the arms embargo would be a mistake," said Mr. Rifkind. But he added: "If there was an international consensus that the lifting of the embargo had become unavoidable then I cannot see that we would veto that."



As U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher (left) concentrates, Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev speaks at a press conference following the Contact Group's talks on Bosnia (AFP photo)

Russia turns up heat on Chechnya

MOSCOW (R) — The Kremlin, its patience finally snapped by last week's bloody hijacking, is turning up the heat on the rebel north Caucasus region of Chechnya and openly trying to promote a rival leadership.

Government-controlled news media gave wide publicity at the weekend to an angry government statement describing Chechen leader Dzhokhar Dudayev's rule as illegitimate and threatening in effect to send in Russian troops to protect the people.

A leading foe of Mr. Dudayev was given prime television time Saturday evening to demand recognition for the opposition Temporary Council as the rightful leadership of Chechnya.

Umar Avturkhanov's comments were broadcast on Commonwealth Television, which is seen in much of the former Soviet Union.

A senior aide to President Boris Yeltsin, Sergei Filatov, accused Mr. Dudayev's administration Saturday of heading its opponents and putting the severed heads on public display.

"The situation in Chechnya has dramatically worsened," Mr. Filatov, head of Mr. Yeltsin's personal administration, told Russia's official ITAR-TASS news agency.

He gave no details. But the Russian daily Kommunisticheskaya Pravda said Saturday that Chechen security forces had beheaded three members of an opposition group and displayed their heads in the central square of the capital Grozny. It gave no date.

Authorities in the neigh-

bouring region of North Ossetia accused Chechnya in a statement of massing troops on its border and sending helicopters on spying missions over the frontier.

But TASS quoted the Chechen Interior Ministry as denying the charge. "The Chechen Republic has only one helicopter and that is a civilian one," it quoted a ministry statement as saying.

The ministry said the situation was calm in Chechnya, which declared independence from Russia in 1991, so far without gaining any international recognition.

Mr. Dudayev's press service issued a statement describing the Russian government's broadcast as a "link in the chain of a propaganda campaign against Chechnya," TASS reported.

"This was aimed, the statement said, at creating conditions for 'resolving the so-called Chechen question by force.'"

Mr. Avturkhanov denied, however, that the Temporary Council was asking for Russian armed intervention.

"One of us is about to ask Russia to bring in troops to restore order. We don't want it and Russia does not want it," he said.

"The Russian leadership should nonetheless accept our request (to recognise) that... the Temporary Council is the highest organ of power in the Chechen Republic."

The Russian government statement called for elections in Chechnya, saying that "healthy forces" were grow-

ing in strength. "They are fighting to restore the constitutional system and basic order and to establish good relations with Russia."

"It can be assumed that the statement... is a sort of blessing on the activities of Umar Avturkhanov and his colleagues," the Commonwealth Television reporter said.

Mr. Chechnya, a thorn in the side of the Russian imperial conquerors of the Caucasus region two centuries ago, has been an irritant to Moscow for some time.

Having, according to Moscow, the status of one of 21 semi-autonomous ethnic-based republics in the Russian Federation, it has refused to back down on its claim to full independence.

The Kremlin has chosen to ignore rather than try to crush the rebellion. But the deaths of four hostages Friday in the fourth hijacking in the region in eight months have goaded the Russians into action.

Each hijack followed a similar pattern. Gunmen, said by Russian authorities each time to be mainly Chechens, took hostages, commandeered a helicopter, then flew off towards Chechnya only to be captured in or near the rebel region.

This time the Chechen authorities threatened to shoot down any helicopter which entered its airspace. Police commandos stormed the helicopter and the hijackers set off a grenade.

Mr. Dudayev has denied giving any assistance to hi-

Edward, Sophie together at yacht regatta

LONDON (R) — Sophie Rhys-Jones, the woman tipped to be Britain's next royal bride, joined her boyfriend Prince Edward at a yacht regatta Saturday, further fuelling rumours of an imminent engagement. The 29-year-old publicist was spotted on the deck of the royal yacht Britannia at Cowes Week, a prestigious Isle of Wight regatta, with Prince Edward and other members of the royal family. Royal watchers in the British press are expecting the prince to announce his engagement in the next few months, with a royal wedding planned for the spring. The couple shied away from publicity at the start of their romance but have recently made a series of joint appearances at royal events. Prince Edward, 30, is the youngest of Queen Elizabeth's children and is seventh in line to the throne. After embarking on a career in theatre management, he set up his own television production company. His brothers Prince Charles and Prince Andrew have both suffered broken marriages and his sister Anne remarried after divorcing her first husband.

Woman suspected of snipping off lover's organ

MANILA (AP) — A seamstress at a garment factory is under arrest, suspected of cutting off her boyfriend's penis with a pair of shears after accusing him of cheating on her, police reported Sunday. Police said Gina Espina, 21, checked into a motel Friday with Donald Jacolo, 39, a co-worker at a local garment factory. After he drank a few beers and fell asleep, she allegedly snipped off his penis with a pair of shears and then tried to flee. Attendants at the motel, searched her bag and found the bloody shears, police said. She is in police custody pending charges. The organ was found on the floor, but doctors were unable to reattach it. Ms. Espina told police she had lived with Mr. Jacolo for a year when she learned he had a wife working abroad. She said she also caught him kissing a female co-worker at the factory. Organ mutilations have been reported in the Philippines long before the highly publicised Lorena Bobbitt case in the United States. Ms. Bobbitt cut off the penis of her husband, John Wayne Bobbitt, but that organ was reattached surgically.

Rolling Stones hit the road

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The Rolling Stones rock back onto the road this week for a 60-show, 43-city U.S. tour — before heading to Europe next year — with the years beginning to thin their own ranks. At an average age of 50, Mick Jagger, Keith Richards, Charlie Watts and Ron Wood are embarking on a frenetic promotional blitz for their new CD Voodoo Lounge. Five years after the last Stones tour drew six million fans, bass guitarist Wyman, Jagger told reporters in May, "said he'd done enough, after 30 years. We were very disappointed." That wasn't enough to put the Stones in danger of moss-gathering though. They signed on bassist Darryl Lee Jones — who has worked with stars such as Sting, Madonna and Miles Davis — and started making tour plans. Priced at \$25 to \$50, Stones tickets might not lure the same sort of young fan that turned out to see the group when they exploded onto the charts more than 30 years ago. On Friday, there were still tickets available for the Stones' two stadium shows in Washington for Monday and Wednesday. But tickets sales for all the U.S. shows are expected to be near sell-outs, and Voodoo Lounge immediately soared to number two on the U.S. charts when it was released — the best launch for any of the group's 22 albums.

50 pigs roasted by lightning

DUNKIRK, France (AFP) — Fifty pigs were roasted alive when lightning struck a barn at a farm in Ledinghem near Dunkirk, in northern France, local emergency services said Sunday. Firemen were inundated with calls over flooded cellars and roads blocked by mud after Saturday night's violent storm, which was very localised.

Poll says Clinton's approval rating is falling

NEW YORK (R) — President Bill Clinton's approval rating among Americans has again fallen, continuing a six-month slide, according to a survey released Sunday.

The poll by Louis Harris and Associates found that only 40 per cent of adults surveyed gave the president an "excellent" or "pretty good" approval rating, while 59 per cent thought his job performance was "fair" or "poor."

The Harris group noted that Mr. Clinton's approval rating is sliding despite an improvement in the economy.

"In the past, the state of the economy has usually been the single most important factor in helping or harming other presidents' standings," pollster Humphrey Taylor said in releasing the results.

The survey found that poorer people were more likely to approve of the president's job performance, with those earning less than \$7,500 per year the only income group to show a 50 per cent or better approval rating.

Blacks were much more positive than the nation as a whole with 64 per cent offering a positive rating, compared with 37 per cent for whites and 42 for Hispanics. Mr. Harris said that Mr. Clinton's approval rating has dropped consistently since a February survey when it was 50 per cent positive and 48 per cent negative.

The survey was conducted between July 25 and July 28 of a nationwide sample of 1,249 adults. The poll has a statistical margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points.

Meanwhile, President Clinton, trying to muster support for universal health coverage in Congress, Saturday complained that the health reform debate was being hurt by the "screaming and yelling" from opponents.

Invoking the memory of President Harry Truman, who unsuccessfully tried to convince Congress to enact universal coverage some 50 years ago, Mr. Clinton said he was trying to overcome the same opposition Mr. Truman faced.

As he spoke outside a county courthouse, before a weatherbeaten statue of Mr. Truman, protesters chanted their opposition to the administration's efforts to overhaul the nation's health system.

Taiwan, China report small progress in talks

TAIPEI (R) — China and Taiwan inched toward accord on the thorny issue of repatriating hijackers in their first talks since delicate ties soured in March when 24 Taiwan tourists were murdered in China, officials said Sunday.

However, Shi Hwei-You, deputy secretary-general of Taiwan's quasi-official Straits Exchange Foundation (SEF), which handles links with Beijing, said many difficulties remained to be ironed out.

"It will require more effort to materialise the ideas or even to put them into written form," Shi told reporters late Saturday, the opening day of the sixth round of talks. "We expect that problems lie ahead."

China agreed late Saturday on the contentious issue of whether jail terms already served by hijackers in Taiwan should be offset after they are repatriated, officials said.

Chief among problems on the agenda is the issue of hijacking civilian aircraft to Taiwan and the repatriation of 16 mainland Chinese who have hijacked 12 Chinese airlines to Taiwan since April 1993.

Taiwan has agreed to send back hijackers during the investigation process in what it calls simple cases but says political cases would be decided only after a trial.

Sri Lankan campaign hots up amid violence

COLOMBO (AFP) — Sri Lankan defence officials Sunday expressed fears that mounting political violence in the run-up to the country's Aug. 16 parliamentary elections may be here to stay.

The slaying of an opposition activist in Anuradhapura district Friday raised to 11 the number of people killed in campaign-related violence since election nominations closed 19 days ago.

Magistrate Sunanda Herat said the victim's family had implicated Posts and Telecommunications Minister A.M.S. Adikari. He has ordered police to produce suspects when the case is called again on Aug. 10.

A Defence Ministry official said retired military personnel were being mobilised to assist police and strengthen security in the run-up to the ballot and prevent post-election violence.

"We are calling military reservists because not a single police division is able to spare men. We will have the entire 50,000-strong police deployed to guard the 9,533 polling booths and 22 counting centres," the official said. Polling booths will be pro-

tection from two days before the election. Curfew-passes have been sent to police stations across the country in preparation for any outbreak of violence as results are announced the day after voting, a police spokesman said.

He said police were already deployed to pull down posters and street decorations of red, blue and green flags of political parties. Election laws here prohibit the display of political posters and symbols.

Party workers have been causing traffic jams by taking motorcades through crowded streets to drum up support for candidates. In response, police last week banned open trucks used for propaganda.

The main opposition People's Alliance (PA), which is mounting a serious challenge to the ruling United Nations Party (UNP), has asked supporters to form "peace committees" to protect the "van-

quished."

PA spokesman Dhamrasi Senanayake and Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe told reporters last week that they hoped for a peaceful ballot but accused each other of violence so far seen.

Kashmiri leader's shrine protest ended

SRINAGAR, India (R) — Indian security forces ended a Kashmiri militant leader's protest against placement of security posts around Kashmir's holiest Muslim shrine by carrying him out of the complex Sunday, witnesses said.

They said security forces bodily removed Yasin Malik, the 30-year-old president of the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), from the Hazratbal Complex and took him to hospital.

Mr. Malik, who suffers from a serious heart condition, entered the complex with his mother Saturday night, shortly after being freed following an earlier aborted attempt to enter it.

He had threatened to fast to death in protest against the security posts around the shrine, which many Kashmiris say amount to a siege that prevents them worshipping there.

The main shrine, believed by Muslims to house a hair of the Prophet Mohammad's beard, was locked, and Mr. Malik, his mother and about five other people started a sit-in at one of the minor buildings of the complex.

Bribery, corruption destroying Pacific environment

BRISBANE (R) — Environmental degradation in the South Pacific is being fuelled by bribery and corruption and unless governments urgently adopt sustainable economic policies the region is doomed, Australia warned Sunday.

"The Pacific is developing into something quite the opposite of the paradise that the popular image has it," said Australia's Minister for Pacific Islands Affairs Gordon Bilney as the 25th South Pacific Forum opened.

Mr. Bilney said island nations had some of the world's highest population growths and some of the lowest rates of economic development, coupled with dwindling natural resources.

"The collective picture... is one in which a lot of South Pacific countries are going to be in grave trouble and a lot sooner than people think," he told reporters.

Opening the forum, Australian Prime Minister Paul Keating said South Pacific governments had to develop urgently sustainable economic policies that would protect their forests, fisheries and human resources for future generations.

"Unless we educate our people adequately, manage our forests and our fish sensibly and sustainably, the simple fact is that we won't have the resources we need to give our region and our children a future," Mr. Keating said.

As host, Mr. Keating chose "managing our resources" as the theme for the forum, which is an annual gathering of heads of government of the 15 independent and self-governing states of the South Pacific, including Australia and New Zealand.

Mr. Bilney said island nations should unite against foreign logging companies offering bribes in order to achieve carte blanche access to the region's dwindling tropical rainforests.

"Unfortunately, it is the case that bribery and corruption has been a factor, particularly in forestry exploitation, in recent years," he said.

Mr. Bilney said there was not a lot of Australia, the South Pacific's biggest aid donor allocating Australian dollar \$3.0 billion (\$2.2 billion) in 1994/95, could do to prevent bribery in the South Pacific timber industry.

"I think it could help, of

course, if every country got together and put up a united front and said we are not going to be picked off," he said.

Mr. Bilney said South Pacific countries were gaining meagre returns from foreign loggers and fishing nations for their resources. "The countries are simply not getting the prices for their exports that they ought to," he said.

An Australian government report on the South Pacific timber industry presented to forum officials has calculated that some countries are losing the equivalent of half their current national incomes through unmonitored logging exports.

Papua New Guinea was losing around Australian dollars \$27 million (\$241 million) annually and the Solomon Islands an estimated Australian dollars \$8 million (\$42 million) a year, the report said.

Mr. Bilney said in one island country, which he did not name, logs were being sold by the foreign company involved for Australian dollars 350 (\$258) per cubic metre while only Australian

dollar 2.70 (\$1.99) per cubic metre was returned to that country.

The region's fisheries were in a similar state.

The South Pacific tuna catch was valued at Australian dollar 2.5 billion (\$1.4 billion) last year but island countries earned only Australian dollar 74 million (\$54 million) in access fees from countries such as Japan, Taiwan, China and the United States, Mr. Bilney said.

The south Pacific Forum Fisheries Agency says under-reporting of catches and poaching is still a major problem, while environmental organisation Greenpeace says over fishing is dramatically depleting South Pacific fish stocks.

The forum leaders will attend a retreat Monday before holding the official round table forum meeting Tuesday.

The forum groups Australia, the Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Western Samoa and Niue.

Edward, Sophie together at yacht regatta

LONDON (R) — Sophie Rhys-Jones, the woman expected to be Britain's next royal bride, joined her boy friend Prince Edward at a yacht regatta Saturday, further fueling rumours of an imminent engagement. The 26-year-old princess was spotted on the deck of the royal yacht Britannia at Cowes, West of England, with Prince Edward and other members of the royal family. Royal watchers are predicting the prince will be next seen at a royal wedding planned for the spring. The couple's first public appearance since their romance began recently made a series of joint appearances at royal events. Prince Edward, 30, is the youngest of Queen Elizabeth's children and is expected to inherit the throne. He is currently a member of the theatre management, and has a part in a television production company. His father Prince Charles and his sister Anne have both offered broken marriages and his sister Anne remarried after divorcing her first husband.

oman suspected of snipping off lover's organ

ANIL (AP) — A 35-year-old man suspected of snipping off his lover's penis, was arrested Saturday by police in a case that has shocked the community. The man, who is believed to be a member of a local gang, was arrested after a woman reported that her husband had been sexually assaulted. The woman, who is now in a hospital, has been identified as a 28-year-old woman who was married to the man for five years. The man, who is now in custody, is believed to have snipped off his wife's penis with a pair of scissors. The woman's husband was found in a state of shock and was taken to a hospital where he is now recovering. The police are currently investigating the case and have not yet charged anyone.

illing Stones the road

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Rolling Stones rock band is set to leave the road this week for a tour of 43 cities in the U.S. — with the yearsning to thin their own. At an average age of 45, the band's members, Mick Jagger, Keith Richards, Charlie Watts and Bill Wyman, are embarking on a tour that is expected to be one of their last. The band has been together for over 30 years and has sold more than 100 million records worldwide. The tour is expected to be a major success, with the band performing at some of the largest venues in the U.S. The band's manager, Allen Klein, has said that the band is not planning to retire and will continue to tour for many years to come.

gs roasted lightning

FRANCE (AFP) — Pigs were roasted by lightning strikes at a farm in Le Mans, France, Saturday. The farm, which is located in a rural area, has been hit by several lightning strikes in the past few days. The strikes have caused significant damage to the farm's buildings and crops. The farm's owner, who is a local farmer, has said that he is not sure how the strikes occurred and is currently investigating the situation. The strikes have caused a lot of concern among the local community, who are worried about the safety of their own homes.

Perry visits Kigali as troops arrive

KIGALI (R) — The first main contingent of U.S. troops arrived in Rwanda's capital Kigali Sunday to get the airport there working and launch a round-the-clock air-lift to ease the plight of millions of Rwandan refugees. U.S. Defence Secretary William Perry visited the bombed-out capital, where he was welcomed by victors of the three-month Rwandan civil war but was told by one of the new leaders that international aid had come too late.

Some 60 U.S. troops arrived at dawn a day after a 15-strong advance party scouted out the airfield, and began working to set up the air-lift. More American soldiers were due to arrive throughout the day. About 440 Canadian troops and 550 British soldiers are also flying here in the next few days as Western troops take over a mission that until now has been carried out mainly by ill-equipped U.N. African troops.

Mr. Perry said the opening of Kigali Airport would allow the doubling of relief supplies going into Goma, the eastern Zaire border town where more than a million refugees are languishing in camps where cholera is killing thousands daily. "I'm pleased to see this country starting to return to normal and hopefully the refugees will start returning," he told reporters. Mr. Perry later flew to Goma.

"I would say we can't do any better than this," Rwanda's Patriotic Front (RPF) military chief and the country's new vice-president, Paul Kagame, said after talks with Mr. Perry in which he said U.S. troops were welcome.

"It has come too late. We warned the international community what was going to happen but they didn't do

anything about it," he added, referring to the bloodbath that has killed an estimated half a million people since early April.

Mr. Perry met President Pasteur Bizimungu in the palace of former leader Juvenal Habyarimana, whose death in a mysterious plane crash on April 6 sparked the genocide of Tutsis and opposition Hutus by his militia and military forces.

The Tutsi-dominated RPF responded by launching a fresh offensive in their four-year war against the hardline Hutu leadership, finally driving their foes out of the country.

But the RPF victory, which led to the creation of a new transitional government under Mr. Bizimungu, a Hutu member of the RPF, also saw the exodus of 2.7 million Hutu refugees.

U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Sadako Ogata, on a visit to Kigali, told reporters the priority was now to coax refugees back to their homeland.

U.N. officials in the refugee camps said Saturday the number of reported cases of cholera was continuing to rise but the percentage of those who died appeared to be decreasing.

The Medecins Sans Frontieres (Doctors Without Borders) charity said, however, that while cholera deaths were waning a dysentery epidemic could prove a greater danger.

In Kigali, U.S. Air Force Lieutenant-Colonel Ron Peck told soldiers: "Don't ask me how long we will be here, I don't have a clue. We will stay until the mission is accomplished."

U.S. troops are camping out in a bullet-riddled airport terminal, which like the entire capital has no running

water or electricity.

The troops are protected by a small security detail, but unlike the ill-fated Somalia operation, there is not expected to be any threat to their safety.

"This operation has nothing to do with what happened in Somalia. We have a government here," Prime Minister Faustin Twagiramungu told reporters as members of the well-disciplined RPF guerrilla force stood about at the airport.

Western troops will get Kigali Airport working 24 hours a day, rebuild blown-up bridges, detonate unexploded weapons and provide field hospitals for refugees coming home.

A Ghanaian band welcomed Mr. Perry when he visited the U.N. Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR) headquarters, where he met the 700-strong commander, Major-General Romeo Dallaire.

Despite Gen. Dallaire's pleas during the fighting, the United States held up for weeks a U.N. Security Council resolution to send 4,000 reinforcements.

When the resolution was finally passed in early June, the United States was asked to help fly the mainly African contingents into Rwanda, but this has so far not been provided.

One problem that the UNAMIR force faced was a lack of equipment to operate in the perilous conditions of wartime Kigali, and the United States, after weeks of delay, finally provided dozens of M-113 armoured personnel carriers.

These now lie idle at Kigali Airport, barely needed in the calm of Rwanda since the defeat of the rump government that tried to take over after the death of Mr. Habyarimana.

Balladur, Perry in Goma

France's prime minister and the U.S. Defence Secretary arrived on separate visits Sunday in Zaire to assess how to increase the U.S. role in the Rwandan relief operation ahead of a French army pull-out from Rwanda.

Mr. Perry's landing at the Zairean border town of Goma aboard a U.S. Air Force C-130 Hercules was delayed by congestion at the small airport with relief flights.

He made no statement on arrival before inspecting a U.S. military water purification plant on the shores of Lake Kivu and meeting U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) officials.

Some 100 U.S. soldiers are based in Goma, operating the water plant and helping unload relief flights. The first bulldozer from a U.N. engineering battalion drove to the Kibumba refugee camp north of Goma Sunday to dig roads.

The water purification plant is operating at only half its capacity because not enough tankers are available to deliver the clean water to the camps, a U.S. military spokesman said.

Mr. Perry arrived from the Rwandan capital of Kigali and Entebbe airport in Uganda — currently the hub of the U.S. operation to distribute relief supplies to Rwanda and its 2.1 million refugees.

Two hundred new U.S. troops are due to arrive in Kigali by Monday to improve handling of aid flights and deliver supplies.

French Prime Minister Edouard Balladur and Defence Minister Francois Leotard arrived earlier Sunday at Goma Airport, the main base for France's "Operation Turquoise", and flew to southwest Rwanda.



A Rwandan regular army soldier helps his brother who is stricken with cholera in a first aid centre specially for soldiers suffering from the cholera epidemic or war wounds (AFP photo)

Poles remember the dead of Warsaw uprising

WARSAW (R) — Poles paid tribute Sunday to the 200,000 victims of the 1944 Warsaw uprising against Nazi occupation when they commemorated the 50th anniversary of one of the bloodiest battles of World War II.

Red and white Polish flags lined streets as masses were held before Monday's main ceremonies which will be attended by German President Roman Herzog, U.S. Vice President Al Gore, British Prime Minister John Major and a Russian President aide.

The German and Russian presence has angered some veterans because of the Nazi brutality during the uprising and Moscow's failure to come to their aid. But Mr. Herzog and Polish President Lech Walesa say it is now time for reconciliation.

"We Germans and Poles must find some way of putting our relations in order. Otherwise a wound will still divide Europe across its centre," Mr. Herzog said in an interview with Polish Television broadcast Saturday night.

Poles regard the 63-day uprising as one of their most heroic battles, although it failed in its aim of seizing control of Warsaw before the arrival of the Soviet army and did not prevent almost half a century of Soviet domination.

Berlusconi coalition hit by dissent

ROME (R) — Silvio Berlusconi's most important political partner Sunday scored a proposed plan to distance the Italian premier from his business empire saying it did not go far enough.

Umberto Bossi, leader of the federalist Northern League, the largest member in the prime minister's tripartite coalition, poured cold water on Berlusconi's plan to have a special committee oversee his huge Fininvest business empire.

"The idea just doesn't stand up," said Mr. Bossi in several television interviews Sunday in remarks bound to rekindle tensions within the embattled governing coalition.

Mr. Berlusconi announced a plan to distance himself from his business empire Friday after a week of sharp criticism over the handling of a corruption probe that has implicated Fininvest and led to the arrest of his brother Paolo.

Mr. Bossi, whose party controls the largest number of seats in Mr. Berlusconi's "Freedom Alliance" which also includes neo-fascists, said he would challenge the prime minister's plan in parliament Tuesday and propose separate anti-trust legislation.

In an interview with Il Giornale newspaper published Sunday, Mr. Bossi denied that he was trying to torpedo the government and said he was merely keen on a more coherent plan.

"You don't want guarantees, you need a genuine separation between ownership and management," he said.

Mr. Bossi said the League

would formally propose Tuesday that all Mr. Berlusconi's assets be run by a special foundation for five years and suggested political parties could play a role in choosing its board members.

Mr. Berlusconi's plan, announced Friday, called for President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro and the heads of the two houses of parliament to name a special committee to oversee the \$7.0 billion a year broadcasting-to-supermarkets empire.

The plan had already run into trouble after Mr. Scalfaro said constitutional obligations meant he could probably not be one of those naming members of the committee.

The plan's failure would be a further blow to Mr. Berlusconi, whose image has been dented by a row over a failed bid to curtail magistrates' rights to order pre-trial detention.

In Milan, Paolo Berlusconi spent the weekend under house arrest after giving himself up to magistrates Friday. He is accused of bankrolling Fininvest bribes to the city's finance police.

But Silvio Berlusconi stepped up pressure on the magistrates Sunday, by saying their investigations risked threatening Italy's recovery from recession and his administration's work.

"Certain actions of the magistrature like this investigation are spreading insecurity, fear and panic among those who take risks and are entrepreneurs," Mr. Berlusconi said in an interview with La Stampa newspaper.

"Objectively, it is a factor of insecurity and an unwitting sabotage of the government's action," added Mr. Berlusconi.

He welcomed any action to stop small-time graft which he admitted was rampant in Italy but questioned the timing of this latest probe.

Mr. Berlusconi made political history by winning general elections in March only three months after entering politics. A victory in European elections and strong standing in the opinion polls added to his aura of invincibility.

His honeymoon period came to an end in July, when Mr. Berlusconi sparked a national outrage with a decree that allowed scores of graft suspects to leave jail, most of them for house arrest.

Meanwhile, former Socialist Prime Minister Bettino Craxi denounced Saturday as "absurd" the Milan trial at which he was sentenced a day earlier to eight and a half years in jail for corruption.

In a fax message sent to AFP here from his hideaway in Hammamet, Tunisia, Mr. Craxi said: "The charges were absurd, the trial was absurd, the sentences were absurd."

He added that the hearing had been "prefabricated" to secure a "political verdict."

As a defendant in the Milan-based Banco Ambrosiano corruption trial, Mr. Craxi was sentenced in his absence on charges of accepting some \$7 million in kickbacks.

He had declined to leave Tunisia to attend the hearing. His lawyer had been given insufficient time to prepare his case, Mr. Craxi charged.

S. African parliament meets against backdrop of increasing labour unrest

CAPE TOWN (AFP) — South Africa's parliament opens Monday as the country gears for another week of labour unrest amid hints of discontent within Nelson Mandela's African National Congress-led government.

About 25,000 workers in the auto industry were poised to down tools this week after wage talks deadlocked, threatening to swell the number of workers already on strike to about 75,000.

A high-powered meeting this weekend of ANC cabinet ministers and regional leaders in Johannesburg began discussing growing tensions between the ANC and its allies over the current strike

wave, the Sunday Times reported.

And on Saturday, Mr. Mandela and a top-level ANC delegation met union leaders of the powerful Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) in a bid to smooth over the cracks between the two organisations.

The union meeting came after the South African Communist Party (SACP) — the third member in a three-way alliance with the ANC and COSATU — launched an unprecedented attack on Mr. Mandela describing his warning that strike action would discourage foreign investment as "upsetting."

COSATU is the country's largest trade union federation and, along with the SACP, is the ANC's strongest ally.

But relations between the three allies have become strained lately with the recent strikes involving up to 50,000 workers in the catering, paper, justice, municipal and confectionary sectors.

Workers in the metal, mining, telecommunications, chemical, and auto sectors held strike ballots last week after separate wage talks broke down, with 78 per cent of auto workers belonging to the National Union of Metalworkers (NUMSA) voting in favour of downing tools.

Angolan rebels offer compromise

LUSAKA (R) — Angolan rebels, negotiating to beat a U.N. deadline for acceptance of a peace package, Sunday offered a compromise on their demand for control of their Huambo province stronghold, a rebel source said.

The source said UNITA, the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola, had rejected a Zambian compromise proposal at Angolan peace talks in Lusaka that a politically neutral governor should be found for Huambo province.

Khmer Rouge demand ransom for kidnapped foreigners

PHNOM PENH (AFP) — The Khmer Rouge have demanded a \$50,000 ransom in gold for three Westerners seized in a train ambush in southern Cambodia, co-Premier Prince Norodom Ranariddh said Sunday.

One of the hostages, Australian David Wilson, wrote a letter saying the trio were safe and outlining the ransom demand.

"I can just say they are safe. We got a hand-written letter which says they are alive," Prince Ranariddh told AFP at his residence, showing the three-page handwritten letter with a photograph of Mr. Wilson attached.

"The Khmer Rouge ask for 100 damlung of gold for the release of the three hostages," the prince said.

Another government official said that he believed the Khmer Rouge were looking for 100 damlung of gold for each of the three hostages.

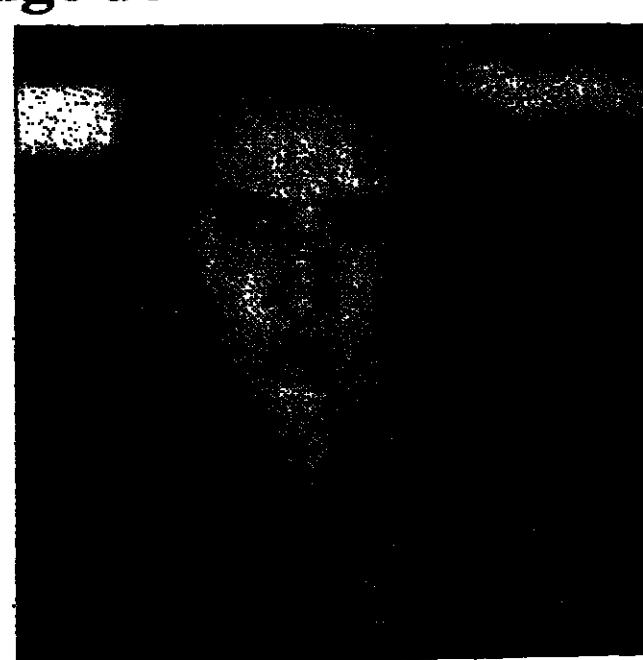
One damlung of gold is worth about \$500.

Prince Ranariddh did not say whether the ransom would be paid but said the government's priority was for the prompt, safe release of the three tourists.

Mr. Wilson, 29, together with Briton Mark Slater, 28 and Frenchman Jean Marie Braguet were kidnapped on July 26 after a Khmer Rouge ambush on a train in the southern province of Kampong.

The guerrillas killed 13 people — five soldiers, two train militia and six civilians — in the attack, police said. Three ethnic Vietnamese were also kidnapped by the guerrillas but were feared killed.

The Khmer Rouge detained some 200 Cambodian passengers but all were subsequently released, police in the capital said quoting a



An undated file photograph of Australian Kellie Wilkinson who is believed to have been murdered by the Khmer Rouge kidnappers along with two British hostages

report from the Kampong governor.

Prince Ranariddh had just returned from a visit to Kampong accompanied by the co-ministers of defence, interior and the army chiefs of staff.

"This shows that we pay great attention to the security of foreigners in Cambodia in general and that we are also very very concerned about the situation of the hostages," he said.

The government, however, had no plans for a manhunt or military sweep of the area, he said.

"We do not intend to launch any military or police operation which could threaten the lives of the hostages," he said.

The prince, however, held out some hope for a negotiated settlement as the three were being held by the same group of guerrillas, led by

Khmer Rouge Commander Paet, which was responsible for holding American aid worker Melissa Himes.

Ms. Himes, kidnapped in Kampong province March 31, was released after six weeks of lengthy negotiations when her aid agency paid a ransom of rice, tools and medicines.

"We already have connections with that group. We will try to send messages to the Khmer Rouge to convince them they have to release those hostages," the prince said.

Police General Lora Min earlier told AFP that he did not think Commander Paet would kill the three if "he can do business."

"If we give him money, maybe he will release them," he said.

The prince said he warned the provincial authorities to do everything possible to se-

cure the hostages' release. "Otherwise I will exchange the civilian and military authorities for the hostages," he said.

Meanwhile police in Britain have warned families of two British and one Australian who disappeared last April in Cambodia that they are convinced the trio was murdered, a Foreign Office spokesman told AFP Sunday.

Acting on "circumstantial evidence" in its possession, British police informed the families of British citizens Tina Dornay and Dominic Chappell as well as the family of Australian Kellie Wilkinson of their beliefs on July 23, according to the spokesman.

But police continued to stress that it does not have "decisive evidence" and that test results from examinations under way in London on human remains found in the area of the trio's kidnapping will not be known for a few more weeks.

Meanwhile, the U.S. State Department's appointment of a diplomat to head an investigation into the genocide under the Khmer Rouge's rule has received mixed reactions in Cambodia.

"If there is an investigation we will cooperate with that, but I am not aware of the appointment," Interior Minister You Hockry told AFP.

The State Department has named career diplomat Alphonse La Porta as head of the Office of Cambodian Genocide Investigation to be based in Washington.

When the office was established in June, Cambodian Foreign Minister and Deputy Premier Prince Norodom Sirivuth said economic development was a greater priority for his country. "Let intellectuals talk ab-

out a commission on genocide. I invite the United States to provide economic assistance to Cambodia," he said.

Prince Sirivuth added that he believed Cambodians were more concerned with "the price of a kilo of rice than a tribunal to judge Pol Pot" — the notorious Khmer Rouge leader whose disastrous rule saw the death of around one million Cambodians.

However, members of the Cambodian People's Party (CPP), the second largest in the three party coalition, welcomed the new office.

"This office will develop the documentation needed for the prosecution of these criminals," party chairman and acting head of state Chea Sim said.

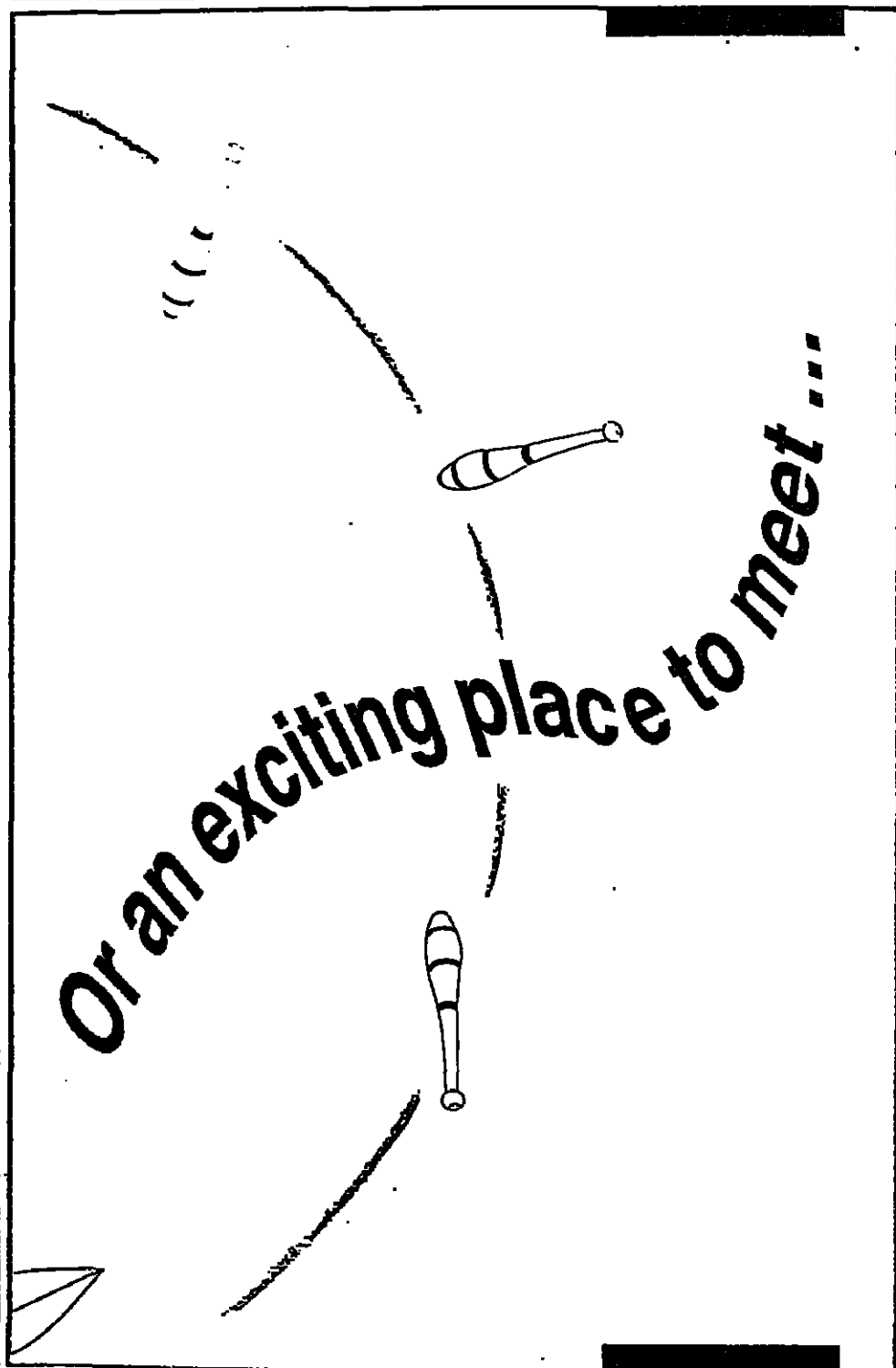
Under the authorisation bill signed by President Bill Clinton, \$400,000 is provided annually in 1994 and 1995 for the genocide office, which will submit its findings to the Cambodian government and possibly an international tribunal.

However, some analysts believe the U.S. government is trying to play down the investigation.

A U.S. embassy official in Phnom Penh denied any knowledge of Mr. La Porta's appointment.

"We have not been involved and have not received any word about the appointment, so I cannot tell you if the embassy will have any role in investigations," he said.

Mr. La Porta is not one of the State Department's highly-regarded Cambodia experts. The new office has only one staff member and investigations in Cambodia will be contracted to non-government organisations.



Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation
Established 1975
جريدة الأردن سياسية مستقلة تصدر بالإنجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية

Chairman of the Board of Directors:
MAHMOUD AL KAYED

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Editorial and advertising offices:

Jordan Press Foundation,
University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman, Jordan.

Telephones: 667171/6, 670141-4

Telex: 21497 ALRAI JO

Facsimile: 696183

The Jordan Times is published daily except Fridays.
Subscription and advertising rates are available from the Jordan Times advertising department.

Alarming gap

SOON AFTER the Tawjihi results came out last week, many private schools ran advertisements congratulating their students for excelling in the exams that determines the future of tens of thousands of Jordanian youth every year.

No public school tried to show off the performance of its students. And it seems the reason for that goes beyond the fact that they are not profit-seeking organisations which want to lure new students and the thousands of dinars in annual fees that the private schools charge.

No solid statistics are available to determine the wide gap in the level of education that private and public schools offer. But indications are that the greatest percentage of failure was registered at government schools in which the majority of Jordanians are enrolled.

There is many a proof that the educational services offered at government schools are deteriorating. This is demonstrated by the many high school graduates who cannot structure a correct English sentence after eight years of schooling in that subject; it is easily detectable in thousands of elementary school students who cannot solve a simple mathematics problem; and it is shown on the faces of underpaid teachers who resent their jobs and are not at the least inclined to do a decent day's work.

Such is not the case at private schools. There, students are provided with the best facilities for learning. Teachers are subjected to constant observation and students are given all encouragement they need to attain the highest levels of education.

But only a limited number of Jordanian parents can afford the extremely heavy cost of private schools. The majority of these are well-to-do citizens who have come to realise that a secure future for their children lies in securing decent education which they know is not available at the majority of government schools. They include middle class parents who sacrifice the comforts of life to ensure their children a better future.

Those who are forced to rely on the increasingly overcrowded and under budgeted government schooling system are the majority of Jordanians, however. Students there are the sons and daughters of soldiers, labourers and civil servants; people who can hardly make ends meet as the cost of living goes higher by the day.

This is a situation that resonates with alarm for the future of the country. Not only does it threaten with a future generation which is not equipped to handle the requirements of modern life, it also strengthens the gap between the poor and the rich. The divide along economic lines will be joined by a more alarming one along educational ones. Jordan will be divided into two classes: One that is wealthy and well-educated, and a second which is poor and under-educated. This is a recipe for catastrophe.

Immediate action should be taken to redress this gloomy situation if the country is to protect its future. The implications in the Tawjihi results should not go unnoticed. They should be studied and analysed and a thorough review of the government educational system should be initiated. The system is obviously moving from bad to worse. No delay in fixing it is justified.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A COLUMNIST in the Al Dustour daily Sunday described the U.N. sanctions on Iraq as unjust, now that the Iraqi leadership has implemented all U.N. Security Council resolutions and he demanded that they be immediately lifted. For peace to be just and enduring in the Middle East region, the world community should see to it that the groundwork for stability and security has been laid, said Mohammad Kawash. The writer said that the decision to lift the sanctions should not remain subject to Washington's whims or desires and the world should move immediately to put an end to the sufferings of the Iraqi people. The continuation of the U.N. embargo does not follow the norms of justice and the international legitimacy, but is clearly a decision taken by Washington, which is keen on protecting its own interests at the expense of the suffering of the innocent population of Iraq, stressed the writer. Kawash said that the continuation of the U.N. sanctions on Iraq does not reflect U.N. justice and is not based on international legitimacy but is rather the worst kind of human rights violation ever witnessed in the annals of history. He said that if the United States is truly oriented towards creating an atmosphere of peace in our region, it ought to lift the embargo and allow stability and security to prevail.

AN APPEAL to the mayor of Amman to come to the help of residents of Al Muhajireen, whose homes are being demolished to make way for the construction of a new shopping and public library, was made by Ahmad Enabes, a columnist in Sawt Al Shaab daily. The writer said that after failing to stop the municipality from evicting them through courts and after receiving compensation for their loss of homes, these residents who all fall under the limited-income-group category, are unable to buy a home.

Human Rights File

By Waleed Sadi

Religious, ethnic discrimination

ISN'T it absurd that in these modern times the Muslim community in rump Yugoslavia is still referred to by the international community as well as by the local governments as "Muslims" instead of identifying them with their ethnic people. Since when have the clocks of civilisation turned back to such an extent as to give national identity on the basis of religion? If this had been the rule of thumb, the world's peoples must be subdivided on only religious basis. Then we will have only Christians, Muslims, Jews and Hindus. This is unacceptable since nationality and ethnic belonging is one thing and religion is quite another. Yet this is exactly what happens when the world insists on identifying the Muslim Slavic people of former Yugoslavia with their religion rather than with the rest of their people. It so happens that the Muslims of Bosnia, are the purest Slavic people in the country. They are part and parcel of the original Slavic ethnic group of people who converted from Christianity into Islam several centuries ago. It appears that the non-Muslim Slavic people have not forgiven their people who turned away from the religion of the majority and opted for Islam when the Islamic empire reached and ruled that part of the world. Henceforth, they became identified with only their religion and were literally "excommunicated" from their ethnic belonging for daring to do just that.

During the summer session of the Human Rights Committee, Slovenia was among the group of states which presented their report on the composition of their country's people and the minority situation there. The Slovenian delegation made reference to the Muslims as a minority constituting a certain percentage of the population. When it was my time to pose questions to the delegation, I immediately asked whether it

would be more correct to refer to the Muslims of Slovenia as a religious minority instead of an ethnic minority as their written and oral reports seem to suggest. I never received an answer. The same thing happened when the committee considered the report of Serbia last year. I asked them then the same question. Strangely enough none of my colleagues, in the committee, who are all experts in human rights and elected to this quasi-judicial human rights body due to their vast knowledge of human rights, picked up the point. I think it is a valid observation nonetheless and I will keep on hammering on the point till some day it may soak in. I would like to see the press stop this wrong identification which suggests that the Muslims constitute an ethnic minority. I would like to see states stop using it with this connotation too. Above all, I would like to see the U.N. system correcting itself on this point. Religion permeates different nationalities and ethnic groups. There is of course a religious "umma" which transcends ethnic and nationality border lines. Yet in these contemporary times when nation-states are not established on religious grounds, it would seem totally anachronistic to refer to the Muslim Slavs by anything that is not associated with their ethnic origin. The International Covenant on Civil Political Rights happens to be the gospel for all human rights endeavours. The provisions of the covenant refers to religious and ethnic minorities. It also rejects discrimination on the basis of religion or race or ethnic background or sex, etc. It would seem that the human rights committee would provide the right place to counteract this backward step that has been gaining currency in official and non official circles. This has not been done. Hopefully, this goal will be attained in the near future when more and more human rights activists would pick the point.



S. Africa faces season of labour discontent

By David Tucker
Reuter

JOHANNESBURG — South Africa appears headed for a season of labour discontent as black workers struggle for the good life promised by President Nelson Mandela in the post-apartheid era.

Labour experts say most black workers, fighting to improve lifestyles held in check by past discrimination, do not care if they are sending the wrong message to investors or if the country can afford their demands.

What they want is a living wage. Tony Twine, an economist with the Econometrix Business Consultancy, said many workers and their unions considered they helped Mr. Mandela's African National Congress (ANC)-led government to power and it was now pay-back time.

"It is probably quite reasonable for them to expect help," said Mr. Twine. "But it doesn't matter how much support they expect or cajole out of the government. It boils down to an economic question at the end of the day."

"The question is when does the honeymoon end (with the new government)," said Mr. Twine, adding that he expected labour unrest to spread over the coming months.

So far this year, 1.2 million man-days have been lost in industrial action against 700,000 in the same period in 1993.

Analysts say the situation could worsen as workers' expectations were dashed by an economy emerging only slowly from the longest recession on record and by the high cost of national reconstruction.

"One of the most disturbing developments is the upsurge in activity on the mines where the mood among both black and white workers is not one of conciliation and where demands are being made for an end of racism, the hostel system and union recognition," says industrial relations consultants Andrew Levy and Associates in its strike report for the first half of 1994.

Mr. Mandela's national unity government is under increasing pressure as it tries to

juggle its differing needs for investment and controlled spending while pursuing its \$7.5 billion and (\$10.4 billion) programme to enhance the living standards of apartheid's victims.

The last thing Mr. Mandela needs is a head-on clash with the unions when he is trying to portray an image of stability.

Mr. Twine said the unions represented a "labour elite." "They have got jobs, they make economic demands out of proportion to the ability of the country to pay and that will inevitably trim marginal jobs out of the economy," he said, adding that between 40 and 50 per cent of the economically-active workforce was unable to find a job in the formal sector.

About 17 million of the country's 38 million people live on or below the breadline. Seven million live in shacks, and spending on education for whites is triple that for blacks.

"In the 'good days' of the late '80s we had been 10 and 11 million people employed in the formal sector, but at least two million jobs have

disappeared since," Mr. Twine said.

Renee Grawitzky, an industrial relations researcher with Levy, said a current strike involving supermarket workers from the pick'n pay chain had come when the powerful Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) was seeking to test itself against the Mandela government.

"COSATU wants to test its power against the new government," she said of the ANC's labour ally in the election campaign.

Ms. Grawitzky said another factor spurring industrial action was the drain of senior union officials to more lucrative white-collar jobs as the new black elite won jobs previously reserved for whites.

Industry sources said that with the country's transition the unions had lost experienced negotiators to political and private sector jobs.

Militant union members were not heeding recommendations by their new union leaders, and their lack of experience and credibility was part of the reason for this.

LETTERS

The value of history

To the Editor:

I WHOLEHEARTEDLY concur with Ahmad Y. Majdoub's views regarding society's view of the humanities and social sciences in Jordan (Jordan Times July 21-22). A technical society without the arts and humanities is a society which risks losing its soul. As an American specialising in the modern history of Jordan, I too have been saddened by the contempt with which many Jordanians view the study of history in particular. Ironically, discouraging students from majoring in history leaves the task to non-Jordanians.

Having noted social attitudes, I should add that Jordanian historians also need to change their approach to history. Graduate students are often instructed to write theses which are little more than collections of micro-level details without broader analysis, making history both boring and irrelevant to the wider processes of historical movement. Students writing on Jordan's past are also discouraged from focusing on anything later than the Ottoman period, no doubt out of fear of challenging some "official" view of contemporary history.

Not only should Jordanian society realise the value of studying history, historians here should also breathe new life into its approaches and time frames of study.

Michael R. Fischbach, Ph. D.
Assistant Professor
Dept. of History
Randolph-Macon College
Ashland, Virginia.

'Blessed are the peacemakers'

To the Editor:

WE OUTPOUR our deep appreciation and support for our His Majesty King Hussein, for the bold step taken on July 25, the historic day, awaited eagerly by each and every Jordanian and Jew. (If I may say so). This right courageous decision after four decades of instability in our lives, shows us the horizon of future permanent stability and prosperity for our children and theirs. We are proud (and thank I speak on behalf of all Jordanians, irrespective of their origin) to have King Hussein as protector. We cherish his courage, and the dignity he has brought to us. Let us all forget the past, and put our sorrows behind, and let us now, like sensible human beings, look forward, together to a brighter peaceful future, with all our neighbours.

"Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God (Holy Bible, Matthew 5:9)

Dr. Barbara Burgan,
Amman.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld only upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.

Tunisia: Peaceful haven or police state?

By Elaine Ganley
The Associated Press

TUNIS — These are happy times for Tunisia, a bright sliver of prosperity between two troubled neighbours. The economy is growing. Tourists come. Good news abounds in the local press. So why are human rights activists in anguish? Why are journalists wary? Why does the swollen face in the police photo barely resemble the suspect?

Almost like an oasis, this slip of land between Libya and Algeria thrives as a tourist haven, spared most of the grim realities besetting other African and Arab states.

A darling of international creditors, Tunisia is moving steadily from state control toward a market economy. It has average annual growth of 5 per cent and a burgeoning middle class. It is a trendsetter in the Muslim World on women's rights and has made education a priority that gets one-third of the budget.

By the end of the century, experts say, Tunisia could join the ranks of developed nations.

But battle scars from a crusade against Muslim fundamentalists and new wounds inflicted in the name of stability mar the idyllic image Tunisian officials paint.

To some critics, this North African nation of gentle smiles and jasmine-scented sun is a picture-postcard police state.

Amnesty International cites torture and arbitrary arrests. It says eight people died under torture in 1991 and 1992.

"One can say there have been serious excesses because people are dead," said Hatem Chaabouni of the Tunisian League of Human Rights. "If you are Tunisian and you speak out against those in power, you can expect to find yourself in jail."

President Zine Al Abidine Ben Ali gained power in a 1987 palace coup against Habib Bourguiba, the "president-for-life" who had led the country since independence from France in 1956. Tunisia's tightly controlled newspapers still solemnly refer to "the change."

Opponents of Mr. Ben Ali say his promises of greater freedom sputtered after two years, then vanished. They claim he uses fear of Islamic fundamentalists as a pretext for cracking down on all political dissent.

"Mr. Ben Ali doesn't fight fundamentalism, he fights everyone," said former prime minister Mohammad Mzali, now in exile in Europe. "He uses the fight against fundamentalism as window dressing for the West."

Thousands of people were arrested in a brutal campaign to crush the fundamentalist movement En Nahda (renaissance).

The page of fundamentalism has been turned in Tunisia, Information Minister Fethi Houidi said, "but we must remain vigilant."

Officials say ambitious education reforms and efforts to improve conditions for women are intended in part to counter fundamentalism. Schools now teach French instead of Arabic and veils are forbidden in government offices.

"We consider ourselves a democracy," Mr. Houidi said. "We are for pluralism and pluralism of information."

But several people were arrested in a three-month period for what Amnesty says were political reasons. They include Moncef Marzouki, former president of Tunisia's Human Rights League, and Abderrahmane El Hani, head of an obscure Arab Nationalist Party, who had announced their intention to run for president in March elections. Authorities insist there was no connection between the arrests and the men's presidential aspirations.

Two French newspapers were banned for alleged bias. A correspondent for the British Broadcasting

Corp. was expelled and the Kuwaiti news agency temporarily closed.

To justify boasts of pluralism, authorities point to the March elections, when the ruling party gave the opposition 19 of 163 national assembly seats. The ruling party had held all the seats since 1956.

Mr. Ben Ali was the only candidate for president and got 99.9 per cent of the votes.

In Tunisia "there are no discordant voices," said Mokhtar Trifi, a lawyer for Mr. Marzouki. "During the elections, it was the element of fear functioning."

Much of the fear centres on the interior ministry. According to Amnesty, torture has taken place inside the ministry building, a sinister edifice with barred windows on the city's convivial main thoroughfare.

"I see people with injuries, with the nose deformed," said Radhia Nasraoui, a lawyer who specialises in what she calls political trials. "I saw a client recently and I cried."

Ms. Nasraoui's husband, Hamma Hammami, is a torture victim, his lawyers say.

Mr. Hammami, head of the illegal Tunisian Communist Workers' Party, was arrested Feb. 14 after 18 months in hiding. He had been convicted in absentia and sentenced to more than nine years in prison on charges ranging from carrying a false identity card to running an illegal organisation.

'Tunisia's vulnerable position between two unstable countries may partly explain the glossy official version of reality.'

At the end of June, courts reduced his total remaining time to one year. Amnesty had demanded Mr. Hammami's release as a prisoner of conscience.

In a police photo, Mr. Hammami's swollen face bears little resemblance to earlier snapshots. His lawyers say he was tortured in Sousse, where he was arrested, and at the interior ministry.

A statement by Mr. Hammami and his lawyers gives a detailed description of physical and psychological torture, including threats of rape and death.

Authorities admit that some prisoners have been tortured to death, but Mr. Houidi maintained that the cases were isolated and that those responsible were punished.

"I can guarantee you that torture does not exist in Tunisia," the minister said. "We have nothing to hide." What is the truth?

Tunisia's vulnerable position between two unstable countries may partly explain the glossy official version of reality.

Libya is unpredictable and Algeria is a tinderbox. If the Islamic insurgency in Algeria spreads, it would devastate Tunisia's tourist industry, one of the country's chief resources.

Some in the professional class, which thrives because of Tunisia's drive to modernise, are caught in the middle.

"When people can't express their point of view, sign a declaration, things are clear," Ms. Nasraoui said. "It means the government doesn't accept differences."

"I risk going to prison for saying this regime isn't democratic. I know I'll be arrested one day."

Peaceful
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state?

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By Robert Fisk

I finished Edward Said's long and often brilliant series of essays in the Gaza Strip, on the very day of Yasser Arafat's "return". There could have been few more appropriate places — or suitable moments — to reflect upon Mr. Said's response to the increasingly elderly, pirouetting figure whom I had just watched driving past the Israeli troops who still occupy what he sees as his Palestine. In 1983, we find Mr. Arafat described by Mr. Said as a man of "audacity" and "vision". In 1986, he was portraying him as "a tragic and fascinating figure". By December 1988, Mr. Arafat had secured "his place in Palestinian and world history". In 1991, Mr. Said admitted the PLO leader's "foolish" position on Iraq. But by February of this year, Mr. Said's Yasser Arafat had become an "elephant" who had misunderstood his own people by signing the "Palestinian Versailles" of the Oslo peace accords, who had never been freely elected, whose "bumbling officials" were corrupt, and who should be thanked for past services before stepping aside for a new generation.

Observing the muted Palestinian response to Mr. Arafat's arrival "home", his flustered speeches, the ominous silence of his Islamic opponents, the arrogance of his plain-clothes "police" as they tried to control the men and women who fought the Israelis from within the occupied territories, Mr. Said's arguments appear devastating. The only wonder is that it took him so long to realise Mr. Arafat's essential inadequacy, the lack of intellectual depth in a man who could find nothing to replace youth and his fading charisma. That Mr. Said has not yet concluded that Israel made peace with Mr. Arafat because of this deterioration is probably due only to the delay which it has taken to get these essays published in book form.

Mr. Said is an American citizen, professor of English and Comparative Literature at Columbia, a one-time member of the Palestine National Council, a man whose assault on Western "orientalism", and its concomitant invitation to reduce all Arabs — indeed all Muslims — to a racial stereotype, may yet be hailed as a supreme academic achievement. Notwithstanding this, nor his repeated encouragement and praise for those fine Israelis who have sought a just settlement



Palestinian children play in garbage in the impoverished Gaza city (AFP photo)

Pirouettes of an exvionary

with the Palestinians, Mr. Said has been the object of a libel campaign in the United States and has endured virtual exclusion from mainstream American press and television coverage. That the finest of his essays have usually appeared in the U.S. in the small circulation "alternative" press should be a matter of shame.

Merely to have argued the Palestinian case — against Israeli occupation and deportation, for example, or against the Israeli appropriation of more than 50 per cent of West Bank Arab land — has provoked vicious attacks by Israel's supporters, among the most disgraceful of which came in the Evening Standard last year when Milton Shulman suggested that Mr. Said might be called "Professor of Terror" and should be forbidden to give the 1993 Reith lectures on the BBC. Benjamin Netanyahu (the Israeli U.N. ambassador, now leader of the opposition, Likud) refused to sit in the same television studio with Edward Said because, he claimed, Mr. Said "wants to kill me". If an Arab had made such an attack on a Jew, he would surely be condemned as anti-Semitic.

Since Mr. Said's moral arguments are so persuasive — and since his personal courage and integrity are so impressive — it is only fair to say that these essays are by no means always satisfying. If the intifada, uprising was "one of the great, anticolonial insurrections of the modern period", where does that leave Algeria with its million dead in the 1954-62 war against the French? And despite his outright

condemnation of Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait, there are times when Mr. Said's unwillingness to accept the full horrors of Saddam Hussein's regime is unacceptable. When he says that Iraq's government "did very little for human rights" and that "democracy does not really exist" there — what on earth does "really" mean? — one feels acute embarrassment. Mr. Said refers to Iraq's well-documented gassing of the Kurds as "a claim".

It was, after all, a U.S. military report which once accused Iraq of the mass gassing of Halabja; but that was when Mr. Hussein was America's ally. Surely no-one can believe this today. And what is one to make of this: "the risk for the Jewish people of a competing Palestinian nationalism, whose history is in its own way as severe in its traumas and sufferings as that of Jews, cannot therefore be lightly put aside..."? Such a comparison of suffering should not be made; Mr. Said knows this full well which is why he uses the unhappy phrase "in its own way". What he means, and what he expresses far more eloquently (and accurately) in another essay, is that the Holocaust should not be used as an excuse — or accepted as an excuse — for Israeli brutality against Palestinians. "How long can the history of anti-Semitism and the Holocaust be used as a fence to exempt Israel from arguments and sanctions against it for its behaviour toward the Palestinians, arguments and sanctions that were used against other repressive governments such as that of South Africa?"

There is a particular irony in the world's response to the Palestinian predicament, which Mr. Said understands. "To be the victim of a victim does present quite unusual difficulties," he says in the course of a discussion with Salman Rushdie. "For if you are trying to deal with the classic victim of all time — the Jew and his or her movement — then to portray yourself as the victim of the Jew is a comedy worthy of one of your own novels." Not just a comedy, one might add. As Mr. Said realises, to criticise Israel — however justifiably — or to report on those aspects of its behaviour which do not reflect well upon it, is to invite an immediate charge of anti-Semitism.

As a result, American journalists have long been supine in their reporting of the Middle East, their critical faculties largely suppressed for fear of being accused of anti-Semitism — ergo the modern-day equivalent of a Nazi propagandist. Men like Noam Chomsky, among the front rank of American academics, have been marginalised by journalists who willingly call upon Israeli "experts" for comment on the dangers of "international terrorism" — without reference either to the Palestinian dispossession or to the greatest individual act of terrorism in recent Middle East history, the slaughter of hundreds of Palestinian civilians at Sabra and Chatila in 1982 by Israel's Phalangist allies, whose own fascist origins in

1936 are, of course, never mentioned.

Mr. Said refers to "the surprising ingenuity of unfairness in this most 'fair' of all societies" although there is, in truth, nothing very surprising about it. Mr. Said talks about the "sleazy propaganda" and "intellectually feeble" work of Bernard Lewis, the total submission of Hollywood to the Israeli cause — Exodus, according to Otto Preminger's Israeli friends did more for the Jewish state in its early years than almost any other outside support — and the sloppy scholarship of Joan Peters' From Time Immemorial which attempts to prove that Palestinian Arabs had arrived in Palestine just before 1948, and thus never really lived on the land. Leon Uri's The Hajj — in which, as Mr. Said rightly says, the Arab is portrayed as "lecherous, deceitful, murderous, irrational, larcenous... subhuman" — reads like a re-write of the worst Nazi tracts against the Jews.

So why the surprise? Elsewhere, Mr. Said has referred to the "dictatorship of consensus" that covers so much of the American media whose super-patriotism and bank of "experts" has meant that foreign policy — particularly U.S. support for Israel — goes unquestioned. Indeed, Israel is so inextricably linked with America that it has become unpatriotic for Americans to criticise Israel. As Mr. Said points out in the most important essay in his book, "the notion that American military power might be used for malevolent purposes is relatively unthinkable within the consensus, just as the idea that America is a force for good in the world is routine and normal." For the same reasons, Israel has to be regarded as a force for good — and thus any criticism of Israel has become, in effect, a criticism of the United States. To doubt the worth of the Arafat-Rabin "peace" is to be "against" peace and thus against America — and for "terrorism" (that most outrageous of all words).

When people turn their newspaper articles into books, it suggests that the author has sensed his own mortality, that he wishes to ensure that his daily scribbling is given immortality on the library shelf. In one article, Mr. Said refers to the leukaemia which struck him two years ago. There may be some who hope for his demise. Here is one humble reader who hopes that full recovery is in store for this very honourable man.

The Independent

Israel accepts 'certain requirements'

(Continued from page 1)

Israel had "mined the path of the peace process and is blocking all progress," he said.

"Syria remains attached to peace and will not give Israel a chance to push it into a corner or force it out of the peace process," Gen. Shehadi said.

He insisted that Syria would not accept any deals outside the framework of the peace process launched at the Madrid conference in 1991, which was sponsored by the United States and Russia.

Syrian state radio said Israel was "making major preparations on the military, publicity and diplomatic fronts for launching an attack in South Lebanon, to make a resumption of talks aimed at a just and comprehensive peace difficult."

Israeli and U.S. officials have accused Iran and the Iranian-backed Hizbollah of involvement in recent anti-Jewish bomb attacks (see separate stories).

"There are opportunities for peace awaiting Warren Christopher, but they are undermined by the threat of (Israeli) aggression, and the U.S. administration and international community should prevent that," the radio said.

The Syrian ruling party's newspaper Al Baath accused the United States of bias towards Israel.

The Jewish state "enjoys a very special relationship with the United States and has seen its room for manoeuvre grow" since the collapse of communism in eastern Europe, it said.

Al Baath said Washington should "remain neutral and preserve its peace initiative based on the Madrid conference and the bilateral talks in Washington."

"What has happened since (1991) is deplorable," the paper said.

Despite an admission by Foreign Minister Peres two weeks ago that Israel recognises Syrian sovereignty over the Golan Heights, and

strong hints that Israel will withdraw totally in return for total peace, negotiations have been halted since the Feb. 25 Hebron mosque massacre.

Gen. Shehadi accused Israel of deviating from the basis of the Madrid conference by seeking separate peace deals with the PLO and Jordan.

"The Israeli rulers are continuing to work for separate deals and partial agreements. This contradicts the principles of the peace process, which is the comprehensive solution," he said.

In his interview marking Syria's armed forces day, Gen. Shehadi also said: "It is not a secret that our armed forces are one of the best armies with field experience... we will not stop developing the army's efficiency and improving its methods to maintain the highest level of readiness."

He added that Syria, with 35,000 troops in Lebanon, would continue to help its Lebanese "brothers."

Tehran warns U.S.

(Continued from page 1)

five people, a day after another car-bomb outside the Israeli embassy in central London left 15 people hurt.

A Jewish charity building in Buenos Aires was destroyed in a similar bomb attack on July 18 that killed nearly 100 people.

On Saturday, an Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman branded the United States as an "international outlaw" and supporter of Israeli "state terrorism," and said Tehran was not a perpetrator but victim of terrorism.

In Britain, the Sunday Telegraph newspaper reported that a leading member of the pro-Iranian Hizbollah group in Lebanon, Imad Mugniyeh, masterminded the bomb attacks.

It charged that Mugniyeh worked in Tehran as head of a team whose mission was to select and attack easy Jewish targets.

Quoting Middle Eastern intelligence sources in London and in the United States, the Sunday Telegraph said Mugniyeh was a founding member of Hizbollah.

The Telegraph said Mugniyeh was responsible for planning the two car-bomb attacks in London last Tuesday against the Israeli embassy and a Jewish organisation.

The paper also blamed him for the attack in the Argentine capital.

The Telegraph said the United States had proof that Mugniyeh was responsible for an attack on the U.S. embassy in Beirut in April 1983 and against the U.S. and French barracks in October of the same year.

The Sunday Times meanwhile said security forces knew the identity of the woman who left the explosives-packed car outside the Israeli embassy.

The paper said Israeli agents had told their British counterparts that she was a Palestinian widow aged 55 to 60 whose husband and son were killed four years ago in southern Lebanon by Israeli troops.

The Sunday Times said Israeli agents believe the woman was seeking revenge over the killing of her husband and son.

The well-dressed woman seen parking the Saudi car packed with explosives turned to revenge after her family was killed in a fire in South Lebanon four years ago, it said. She was also said to belong to Hizbollah.

The Sunday Telegraph report on the organisers of the bombing said radical Iranian ayatollahs opposed to the Middle East peace process had commissioned Mugniyeh, who led Hizbollah's undercover wing Islamic Jihad, to coordinate strikes on "soft" Jewish targets.

"They are parts of a campaign that has been launched with Iran's backing and using Mugniyeh's expertise to attack Jewish and Israeli targets around the world."

Mugniyeh, known by the nickname "Iran's Carlos," was personally responsible for the kidnap of British hostages in Lebanon in the 1980s, the Sunday Telegraph said, but has been lying low since the captives were freed.

The "radical elements" in Tehran have ordered the bombing campaign in outrage the peace process which has reconciled Israel and some of its former Arab foes, it said.

The suspected "widow bomber," who drove coolly through security checks and managed to slip away from the scene after the blast, was probably trained in a camp in the Bekaa Valley, the Sunday Times said.

Israel and Arabs meet

(Continued from page 1)

environmental factors which the Israeli authorities are ignoring. We have a major problem which is the hazardous waste, toxic waste, solid waste, liquid waste, nuclear radiation, air pollution and other issues," Mr. Ishak said.

The meeting, chaired by Japan and known as "a consultative group meeting," was part of multilateral talks on the environment and is in line with the Middle East peace process launched by Washington and Moscow in Madrid in 1990.

Syria and Lebanon are boycotting all the multilateral

Israel besieges village

(Continued from page 1)

area was reported over the weekend, they added.

Hardliners determined to destroy the Middle East peace process are suspected of last week's two London car-bombings which followed a July 18 attack on a Jewish community centre in Buenos Aires that killed nearly 100 people.

The Beirut government and Hizbollah guerrillas fear a massive attack.

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Instability, political uncertainty remain main obstacles to investment in Arab World

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Economic reforms in the Arab World have made investment more attractive but local businessmen are still reluctant to pump large funds into the market due to political instability, according to a key Arab League organisation.

The Kuwait-based Arab Corporation for Investment Guarantee (ACIG) said the majority of Arab investors it had surveyed agreed instability and political uncertainty were the main obstacles to investment in the region.

"Political instability remained the main hurdle for the fifth year," the ACIG said in its monthly bulletin received here Saturday, citing the results of the survey.

Several Arab countries have embarked on large-scale reforms to tackle persistent economic problems, such as growing debt, unemployment, negative growth and deficits in their budgets and balance of payments.

The reforms include privatisation, the improvement of investment laws and easing of trade barriers.

Although some Arab countries reported an increase in capital inflow, investment in the region as a whole has remained a fraction of the total Arab assets abroad of between \$600 and \$800 bil-

lion. Official estimates showed inter-Arab investments stood at around \$26 billion but only \$12 billion are pure Arab investments.

Overseas Arab funds, a large part of which are owned by oil-rich Gulf nations, include between \$200 and \$300 billion in stocks, \$260 billion in bank deposits and the rest in real estate and other sectors. Most of the funds are based in the United States and other Western countries.

Arab investors have ignored repeated calls to repatriate part of their funds, arguing that they sometimes suffer losses due to upheavals in world markets and currency and exchange rates.

Experts have noted that many Arab states suffered from instability and wars over the past decade. They cited the wars in Sudan, Somalia, Lebanon, Yemen, Iraq and Kuwait, Muslim violence in Egypt and Algeria, the Western Sahara conflict and the state of war between Israel and neighbouring Jordan and Syria.

The ACIG, with capital of around \$80 million, said healing inter-Arab rifts and peace between Israel and its Arab foes would help end the instability and woo investors.

"It is hoped that the negative effects of instability on investors will ease with the launching of peace negotiations, which could lead to a just solution to the problem of occupied Arab territories. This, coupled with efforts to iron out Arab differences and ongoing economic reforms in Arab countries, will create a state of tranquillity and confidence in investors."

Apart from instability, the ACIG survey found numerous other obstacles to investment in the Arab World. They included ambiguous investment laws in some member states, red tape and difficulties in obtaining licences and visas, restrictions on currency and profit transfers, insufficient tax exemption, lack of skilled labour, poor infrastructure, double taxation, high unemployment and inflation rates and a low level of Arab economic cooperation.

"Opinions in the survey showed that the investment climate in eight Arab countries improved in 1993, while it deteriorated in eight other countries and remained unchanged in the remaining members," the ACIG said.

Lebanon, which has seen a boom in investment since the end of the 15-year civil war in 1990, was classified as the most attractive member for Arab investors.

Arabs face shortage in oil refining

ABU DHABI (AFP) — A steady growth in world demand for refined products will create a severe shortage in output in Arab states although many of them are expanding their refineries, according to an official study.

The expansion will boost Arab refining output to 303 million tonnes (5.97 million barrels per day) in the year 2000, from 284 million tonnes (5.6 million b/d) in 1992, said the study by the Kuwait-based Organisation of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC).

"There is a steady growth in world demand for the less polluting light refined products," said the study, published Sunday in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) oil ministry's magazine, Oil and Industry News. "This will lead to shortages with different levels in several light refined products despite planned expansions in production capacities."

A current surplus in gas oil output will turn into a deficit of 7.5 million tonnes by the year 2003 and will jump to 24 million tonnes by the year 2010, said OAPEC, which groups 10 key Arab oil-producing countries.

Another surplus in kerosene will also turn into a gap of 2.5 million tonnes by the year 2010, it added.

It predicted a shortage in gasoline output of 1.5 million tonnes in 2005 and around four million tonnes in 2010, while the gap in asphalt and lubricants would rise from 90,000 tonnes to five million tonnes in 2010.

Arab states have 57 refineries, most of which are based in the Gulf. Saudi Arabia, the world's top oil exporter, produces nearly one third of the total Arab refined products from its nine refineries. The kingdom and other Arab producers have embarked on projects to boost the output capacity of

their refineries as part of overall expansions in their energy sector to meet growing domestic and foreign demand.

According to the Damman-based Arab Corporation for Petroleum Investment, Arab states need to pump nearly \$35 billion into oil expansion projects until the year 2000.

Forty-seven billion dollars are needed for gas projects, \$19 billion for refining, and \$20.8 billion for petrochemicals.

The bulk of the funds are expected to be spent by Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iraq, Libya and the UAE. The five countries control nearly 60 per cent of the total world crude oil reserves of around one trillion barrels.

"Arab states should develop their refineries and increase their production capacities to a level that will bridge the expected gap in light products," OAPEC said.

Egyptian revenues drop

CAIRO (R) — Egypt's revenues from foreign currency, tourism and the Suez Canal, have fallen again, a report for the cabinet said.

Tourism receipts fell to \$79 million in the month of April from \$114 million in the same month last year.

For the first four months of the year receipts were \$373 million, compared to \$462 million in the same period in 1993, said the report, made available to Reuters Sunday.

The first four months of the year was a period of activity by Muslim militants who attacked tourist trains and Nile cruises deliberately

level of political violence has subsided since the end of April.

In May, the number of tourists visiting Egypt rose for the first month this year but the average visit was shorter and the number of tourists rights declined to 919 million, from 1,073 million in May last year. Revenue figures were not available.

The Suez Canal earned the country \$162.8 million in May, compared with \$169.6 million in May 1993. The figure for the first five months of the year was \$789 million, against \$821 million in the same period of 1993.

Production of petroleum, another important source of foreign exchange, rose to 3.75 million tonnes in May, up from 3.7 million in April but down from 3.78 million in May 1993.

The fall in production this year is likely to be offset by the recent rise in world oil prices. The international benchmark Brent Crude has recovered from a five-year low of \$13 per barrel in March to a current price of around \$17.

Egyptian production of gas, used increasingly in power generation, rose to 773,000 tonnes from 750,000 in April and 740,000 in May 1993, the report said.

Georgia seeks foreign investment

TBILISI (AFP) — War, a crippled economy and violent crime are not preventing the Georgian government from trying to attract foreign investors to help put the troubled Transcaucasian republic back on its feet.

But the virtual collapse of Georgia's transport and communications infrastructure, erratic energy supplies and the lack of any attractive commodity reserves have seen even the most adventurous foreign businessmen give Georgia a wide berth.

In a meeting earlier this week with Georgian leader Eduard Shevardnadze in the capital Tbilisi, John Odling-Smee, director of the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) Balkan and Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) operations, again refused to release a credit of 111 million SDRs (Special Drawing Rights) earmarked for Georgia.

"It will be necessary (for Georgia) to stop living off the drug of central bank credits and to create a real currency," said Mr. Odling-Smee, arguing that only then will foreign investors start to risk their capital in Georgia.

Vice-Premier Temur Basila, an opposition politician given the unenviable task of

beefing up Georgia's currency, the coupon, has promised to carry out the monetarist-style reform held dear by the IMF.

The Russian rouble is the country's de facto currency, recently replacing the coupon even for some state-owned utilities such as the telephone service.

Guram Nakaidze, deputy chairman of the State Committee for Foreign Economic Relations, suggested that the June 24 arrival of Russian peacekeepers in the break-away republic of Abkhazia, would send a "positive signal" to foreign investors.

Abkhazia fell to separatists last September after 13 months of fighting with Georgia.

Mr. Nakaidze claimed the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) would next week release a 35 million ECU (\$42 million) credit for the modernisation of Georgia's power stations and said the bank was also studying a \$720 million plan to modernise Georgia's Black Sea port of Poti.

Saknavtobi's vice-chairman, Vano Lobjanidze, said a joint-venture with J.P. Kenny to build a 200,000 tonne-per-year oil refinery outside Tbilisi will be completed at the end of the year.

However, such big plans and the grandiose visions of newly-created trade organisations like the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Region are not the real dynamo of Georgia's foreign trade.

It is ordinary Georgians, who fill up as many suitcases as they can carry with consumer goods on short bus-trips to neighbouring Turkey or Iran, who form the backbone of the country's foreign trade.

German businessman Joachim Schoenfeld, whose great uncle, a wine trader, regularly travelled to Georgia before the revolution to buy Georgian wine for discerning customers back in Bremen, opened an office for the German international forwarding company Miltzer and Muench in Tbilisi last March.

Mr. Schoenfeld, who has been threatened by Georgia's powerful organised crime syndicates, uses armed escorts to truck cargo across the republic.

Vietnam plans to slash red tape

HANOI (AFP) — Vietnam plans to slash through much of the red tape surrounding licenses for foreign investment in an effort to head off growing competition for overseas capital, a report has said.

Dau Ngoc Xuan, chairman of the State Committee for Cooperation and Investment (SCCI), attempted to reassure foreign investors that Vietnam will cut back on the lengthy and expensive licensing procedures, the Vietnam Investment Review said.

"Policies will be enacted to slice away lengthy administrative procedures and licensing requirements," Mr. Xuan said in an interview with the weekly newspaper, which is published by the SCCI.

A top priority will be a ban on local authorities setting up their own investment licensing bodies that overlap with the SCCI while any existing committees will be closed down, Mr. Xuan said.

"In the past investors were often forced to seek approval from both local and central

authorities," Mr. Xuan said. "No clear procedures setting out proper jurisdiction over projects were ever established."

The SCCI is also aiming to cut the time to win a license from three months to two, while approvals for small projects should be completed in six weeks, the cabinet-level official said.

Foreign investors in Vietnam frequently complain about a stifling bureaucracy and corruption among government officials as well as a lack of transparency in investment rules.

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Kuwait announces major privatisation plan

KUWAIT CITY (Agencies) — Kuwait Finance Minister Nasser Al Rodhan Sunday announced a \$12 billion plan to privatise state-owned enterprises.

Sheikh Rodhan quoted by the English-language daily Arab Times, said it would cover privatisation of enterprises in the water, electricity and communications sectors.

Some \$800 million dollars (\$2.56 billion) would be generated by the sale of companies belonging to the state-run Kuwait Investment Authority, which owns or part-owns 63 local enterprises, Sheikh Rodhan said.

Six of the companies were being privatised, the minister said, and the state's share in 13 other companies had already been sold off.

The privatisation would be spread over at least five years, economic experts said.

In April, the prime minister and crown prince, Sheikh Saad Al Abdallah, appointed a new cabinet to revive the economy, which is still hit by the effects of the Iraqi occupation of August 1990 to February 1991.

Privatisation, taxes on public services and the opening up of the oil sector to foreign companies form the basis of Kuwait's. But Oil Minister Abdul Mohsen Midaj said Saturday that Kuwait had given up its plan to open the sector.

Kuwait's budget deficit has led the government to draw on its reserves abroad, which have diminished to \$35 billion compared with \$100 billion before the Gulf crisis.

Oil price instability has aggravated the deficit, which is put this year at \$5.4 billion and expected to rise to around \$7 billion in 1995.

The economic reforms are aimed at eliminating the de-

ficit by the year 2000, Sheikh Rodhan said.

In other comments the finance minister was quoted as saying employers should help pay for state welfare services enjoyed by their expatriate workers.

"Employers are bound to pay part of the cost on the state for expatriates they recruit. I believe this is a legitimate right for the state which it can implement any time," the minister was quoted as saying by Al Seyesah newspaper and sister paper, the English-Language Arab Times.

"What we have discussed on this issue so far is the need that employers should bear certain additional charges to cover part of public services provided by the state to expatriates they employ," he pointed out.

Big debt service payments due over the next two years, a recent oil price slump and a Gulf war-related halving of foreign reserves have made Kuwaiti planners consider ways of raising more state revenue to meet a growing national budget deficit.

Sheikh Rodhan did not say how such a charge would be imposed. He added it was probably a measure for the medium to long term.

"The government aims by this (expatriate charge) to close the gap between the different salaries paid to expatriates and (higher paid) Kuwaitis," the minister was reported as saying. "It is this big salary difference which encourages Kuwaiti businessmen to recruit expatriates so as to make more profit."

The government, keen to cut state payroll costs, wants to prod private firms into hiring more Kuwaitis in preference to low paid Asian and Egyptians who dominate the job market.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR MONDAY AUGUST 1, 1994

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: You will be busier than expected today so try to get an early start.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) You are able to reach a personal aim early in the day, but later unexpected difficulty arises. Relax at home tonight with your loved ones.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) You are able to gain some aim which means much to you today. Avoid one who could harm you in some way which could be detrimental to you.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Get in touch with as many friends as you possibly can and come to a better understanding with them and you will have a better relationship.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 19) Find a better system for handling your mounting financial affairs. Sidelstep a foe who keeps annoying you and you will stay out of trouble.

AQUARIUS: (January 20 to February 18) Find the right way to gain your fondest aims and don't let others stop you. Be sure to improve your appearance and you will be a success.

PISCES: (February 19 to March 20) A day when you can use more imagination and get excellent results in career matters. Strive for increased happiness in your daily life.

Birthstone of August: Peridot — Golden Quarts

THE BETTER HALF

By Glasbergen

Peanuts

Mutt'n'Jeff

THE Daily Crossword

by Wilson McBeath

ACROSS

- 1 Line York
- 5 Clear the board
- 10 Boy, it's hot
- 14 Flammaker
- 15 Waterfall
- 16 Actor Alain
- 18 Paragon
- 19 Adder
- 20 Blouse
- 21 Kitchen item
- 22 Love song
- 23 Composer
- 24 Reveal
- 25 Clayey mixture
- 26 Musical composition
- 27 Broadway musical
- 34 Trading place
- 35 Ancient kingdom
- 36 Profit trailer
- 37 Visionary
- 40 Payable
- 41 Monastery man
- 43 Sandburg or Sagan
- 44 Baseball
- 45 Beethoven opus
- 46 Downgrade
- 47 Sneeze
- 50 Arms went here
- 51 Wall finish
- 54 The Student
- 55 Prince for one
- 56 Lister
- 58 Thrust
- 61 A Webster
- 62 Branch angle
- 63 Grenoble's river
- 64 Gilt
- 65 — en scene
- 66 Seasonal song
- 67 Dutch cheese

DOWN

- 1 In addition
- 2 River into the Seine
- 3 Day
- 4 Cheese dish
- 5 Playwright
- 6 English author
- 7 "Come home, home" (Pound)
- 8 Help
- 9 Participants
- 11 Owl
- 12 Always
- 13 Left
- 21 Nursemaid
- 23 Grump
- 25 Mushroom
- 26 Gripes
- 27 — which way
- 28 Cow college
- 29 Tote
- 30 Beverly Hills drive
- 31 Moon
- 32 Compulsory
- 34 Denoted
- 35 BEG word
- 36 Oust
- 42 Hole filler
- 43 Huge
- 44 Street of angulation
- 48 Vehicle fuel
- 49 Agnew
- 51 Petrarca
- 52 Public vehicle
- 53 Author Leon
- 54 Finished
- 55 Repulse
- 56 Actor
- 57 Interrupting sound
- 60 Cute — button

Financial Markets

in co-operation with
Cairo Amman Bank

Foreign Exchange Market Summary

(July 25 - July 29, 1994)

AMMAN — The dollar depreciated sharply against most European currencies at the end of last week, as it ended the week 0.95 per cent lower against the mark and 1.01 per cent lower against sterling. Meanwhile, it rose one per cent against the yen.

The U.S. unit appreciated slightly against other major currencies Monday. Reports indicated that U.S. Commerce Secretary Brown expressed his continued optimism over the probability of achieving progress in U.S.-Japan trade talks. This happened despite approaching the July 31 deadline for Japan's opening its markets to some American products, which was set earlier during the bilateral trade talks.

However, Mr. Brown added that he wants measurable progress, and did not rule out the possibility of trade sanctions against Japan otherwise. On the other hand, some market participants concern over the U.S. Congress's investigations in the White Water case the next day, as it was one of the reasons for the dollar's decline during summer.

The dollar retreated against the mark and yen Tuesday, while rising against sterling. It declined on concern over the U.S. Congress's investigations in the White Water case, as well as concern over the on-going U.S.-Japan trade talks.

The U.S. unit declined sharply against major European currencies Wednesday, while rising slightly against the yen. The dollar also lost ground against the mark after being affected negatively by the decline in U.S. bond prices, which fell after the release of U.S. Durable Goods' Orders showing a decline of 1.3 per cent in June, compared to the previous month. On the other hand, the dollar rose against the yen on two announcements.

The first came from leading American economist Fred Bergsten, as he expressed hope in achievement of progress in U.S.-Japan trade talks. Mr. Bergsten also predicted that the U.S. administration will postpone the July 31 deadline for Japan's opening its markets to some of the American products. The second announcement came from an official in the U.S. administration who conveyed the administration's desire for achieving progress in trade talks with Japan.

The dollar rose sharply Thursday, on expectations of a large increase in U.S. second quarter gross domestic product (GDP) later in the day. It also appreciated in view of a rise in U.S. bond prices, which rose on increased foreign demand. Meanwhile, the dollar penetrated the 100 yen level for the first time in a month, after being affected positively by expectations of a probable agreement between the two

parties in the U.S.-Japan trade talks. This happened despite an announcement by the U.S. Deputy Trade Representative in its talks with Japan, who said that the recent talks held in Hong Kong achieved minimum progress.

The U.S. unit retreated against other major currencies Friday, however, especially against European currencies. It declined after the release of U.S. GDP showing real annual increase of 3.7 per cent in the second quarter of 1994, compared to a rise of 3.3 per cent in the first quarter. The GDP figures came below economists' expectations of four per cent, which dampened expectations of a probable near-term Fed tightening. Meanwhile, the rise in U.S. bond prices stemmed the dollar's decline.

The U.S. unit, thus ended the week at 1.5829 marks, 99.95 yen and at 1.5430 dollars to the pound sterling.

New York Closing Rates for Major Currencies Against the U.S. Dollar

| Currency | 22/7/94 | 29/7/94 | Percent Change |
|----------------|---------|---------|----------------|
| Sterling Pound | 1.5267 | 1.5430 | 1.01 % |
| Deutsche Mark | 1.5960 | 1.5829 | 0.95 % |
| Swiss Franc | 1.3352 | 1.3395 | 1.17 % |
| French Franc | 5.4625 | 5.4045 | 0.96 % |
| Japanese Yen | 98.95 | 99.95 | 11.00 % |

U.S. Dollar

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin

Date: 31/7/1994

| Currency | Bid | Offer |
|----------------|--------|--------|
| U.S. Dollar | 0.6940 | 0.6960 |
| Sterling Pound | 1.0704 | 1.0756 |
| Deutsche Mark | 0.4376 | 0.4400 |
| Swiss Franc | 0.5176 | 0.5202 |
| French Franc | 0.1265 | 0.1258 |
| Japanese Yen | 0.0092 | 0.0091 |
| Dutch Guilder | 0.3902 | 0.3922 |
| Swedish Krona | 0.0437 | 0.0439 |
| Italian Lira | 0.0037 | 0.0039 |
| Belgian Franc | 0.0037 | 0.0039 |

Per 100

JORDAN FINANCIAL MARKET

NOTING: BANK OFFERS: AMMAN - 063710

TELEPHONE: 063710 / 063710

ORGANIZED MARKET: JORDAN PRICE LIST FOR 31/7/1994

COMPANY'S NAME

TRADED PRICE

OFFERING PRICE

CLOSING PRICE

AMMAN NATIONAL BANK

AMMAN NATIONAL BANK

AMMAN NATIONAL BANK

AMMAN NATIONAL BANK

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Jordanian businessmen familiarised on details of EU forum to promote ties

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Nearly 100 Jordanian businessmen from all sectors of the economy were familiarised Sunday on an encounter with European counterparts under one roof in Cairo in December as part of the European Union's (EU) efforts to encourage trade links between the Middle East and Europe, organisers said.

Colin Cocknell, the acting head of the European Commission delegation in Amman, addressed the gathering, explaining in general the EU's objectives and the union's keen interest in strengthening business ties with the Middle East and taking advantage of the opportunities that Arab-Israeli peace offers to the region.

The central theme of the Amman meeting was to inform Jordanian businessmen of the Dec. 6-7 conference in Cairo entitled "Partnership, EU-Middle East," and the opportunities the event offers for direct contacts with European firms, said Riyadh Khouri, director of MEBA Ltd., an Amman-based consultancy firm which organised the meeting.

"We have had an excellent response; people are very interested," Mr. Khouri told the Jordan Times. The meeting was attended by a "wide cross-section" of the Jordanian economy, including businessmen from the transport, tourism, energy, industry and contracting sectors.

Mr. Khouri described the Cairo conference as a very good opportunity for businessmen not only to meet European counterparts but also make deals.

"The event is heavily subsidised by the European Union," he said. The conference offers an opportunity for Jordanian companies to get in direct contact with European firms and also have their names and details entered in a catalogue that will be distributed all over the world, he said.

The actual cost of participation in the conference and listing in the catalogue is \$170.

Participants are entitled to 50 per cent discount on air fares and "very cheap prices" at Cairo hotels while attending the two-day event.

Sunday's meeting in Amman was held at the Philadelphia Hotel and another

similar gathering is planned for Wednesday.

More than 310 companies have already been selected to attend the Cairo event from among 1,400 applicants, a EU press release said, adding that the forum is expected to be attended by about 1,200 companies.

"The event... offers an opportunity to broaden contacts, develop common business opportunities and work towards the development of peace through prosperity in the region," it said.

The Cairo forum is an EU-sponsored initiative to "promote ties between firms in the European Union and the Middle East and to promote regional integration in the Middle East," it said.

The EU is closely involved in a parallel track to develop the region's economy along with the 33-month-old Arab-Israeli peace process. The union is also very active in trying to bring Arabs and Israelis together at various forums, including heavy political debates as well as media gatherings.

Companies from Jordan, Egypt, the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip and Israel as well as the six Arab states of the Gulf are expected to take part in the Cairo meeting.

The EU also hopes that Syrian and Lebanese businessmen could be brought in formally at a later stage (Syria and Lebanon are officially staying away from the multilateral phase of the Middle East peace process, saying regional cooperation and business contacts with Israel could come only after the bilateral political issues are satisfactorily resolved).

Beyond Arab and Israeli business contacts with European firms, a key objective of the forum appears to be to make contacts between Arab and Israeli companies ahead of the possible end to the Arab trade boycott of Israel as part of an overall peace settlement in the Middle East.

The EU, particularly Germany, has been calling for an end to the secondary and tertiary effects of the decades-old Arab boycott of Israel. The primary boycott involves Israeli companies while the secondary and tertiary boycott is targeted at companies linked with Israel and with companies doing business with firms which are boycotted for their links with the Jewish state.

UAE bank credits surge, assets down

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Credits extended by United Arab Emirates (UAE) banks surged by more than 11 per cent in 1993 while their assets declined because of a drop in foreign assets, the central bank said Sunday.

Credits by the 19 national banks and 28 foreign units totalled 74.6 billion dirhams (\$20.3 billion) at the end of 1993, compared with 67 billion dirhams (\$18.25 billion) at end 1992, it said in a report.

A breakdown showed trade and construction received the lion's share of loans, given the absence of other major investment opportunities in the region.

By the end of 1993, credits for trade stood at 25.7 billion dirhams (\$7 billion) and for construction at 13.5 billion dirhams (\$3.67 billion).

Industry received 4.4 billion dirhams (\$1.19 billion). An upswing in trade and construction activities in 1993 enabled most UAE banks to make record profits in 1993 and bankers expect an even better performance in 1994.

The bulk of credits extended to trade financed UAE's imports, which jumped to 72 billion dirhams (\$19.6 billion) in 1993 from 64 billion dirhams (\$17.4 billion) in 1992, according to official figures.

Crude oil accounts for the bulk of the UAE's exports, which fell to 44.5 billion dirhams (\$12.1 billion) in 1993 from 51.6 billion dirhams (\$14 billion) due to a decline in oil prices.

Despite the surge in credits, bank assets declined to 155.2 billion dirhams (\$42.2 billion) from 161.1 billion dirhams (\$43.89 billion), according to the central bank report.

It showed the decline was partly caused by a drop in foreign assets to 63 billion dirhams (\$17.1 billion) from 66 billion dirhams (\$17.98 billion).

The fall in foreign assets was due to a sharp decline in deposits to \$544 million from \$2.26 billion.

Deposits, the barometre of investors' confidence in banks, soared to 77.6 billion dirhams (\$21.1 billion) from 71.9 billion dirhams (\$19.5 billion), the report said.

While investments abroad surged to 7.3 billion dirhams (\$1.98 billion) from 5.3 billion dirhams (\$1.44 billion), domestic investment remained almost unchanged at 1.2 billion dirhams.

"Domestic investment does not include deposits with local banks. Such investments have remained relatively small because the market itself is small and investment fields limited," a UAE banker said.

Survey:

Japan banks net stock sellers for first time

TOKYO (AFP) — Japan's leading banks became net sellers of stocks for the first time ever last year with sales reaching 65.2 billion yen (\$650 million), according to a Nomura Research Institute survey.

The survey, published by the Nihon Keizai Shimbun, said the net sales of stocks by 21 banks in the year to March reversed net purchases of 720 billion yen a year earlier. A year before that, net purchases by the 11 city banks, seven trust banks and three long-term credit banks came to 300 billion yen.

Among the banks, which are all struggling with mountains of bad debt left over from an orgy of speculative lending in the late 1980s, Yasuda Trust and Banking Co. Ltd. topped the list of sellers with net sales of 9.6 billion yen.

Tokai Bank Ltd. ranked second with net sales of 6.8 billion yen followed by Asahi Bank Ltd. with 4.6 billion yen. Hokkaido Tokai Bank Ltd. with 4.3 billion yen and Industrial Bank of Japan Ltd. with 3.7 billion yen.

Daiwa Bank Ltd., which acquired a majority stake in its troubled affiliate, Cosmo Securities Co. Ltd., last year, topped the list of buyers with net stock purchases of 10.3 billion yen. Mitsui Trust and Banking Co. Ltd., came next with 3.4 billion yen, followed by Sumitomo Bank Ltd. with 2.7 billion yen.

A spokesman for the research arm of Nomura Securities Co. Ltd. said the information came from a private survey it had conducted and had not been intended for publication.

Meanwhile, Japan's major commercial banks have drastically reduced their bad loans to developing and former socialist nations, the Kyodo news agency has reported quoting financial sources.

The outstanding balance of loans held by Japan's 11 leading commercial banks stood at 883 billion yen (\$8.8 billion) at the end of last March, a decrease of about 630 billion yen from a year earlier, the sources said.

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U.S. sweeps cycling at Goodwill Games

ST. PETERSBURG, Russia (AP) — The United States swept the top three places in the women's cycling event Sunday at the Goodwill Games, while top American wrestler Bruce Baumgartner had his 23-match winning streak broken.

Brooke Blackwelder, Karen Livingston and Karen Dunn finished 1-2-3 in the women's 44-kilometre (27-mile) criterium race, a 20-lap circuit around the Hermitage Museum.

Blackwelder, of Montrose, Colo., and Livingston, of Gainesville, Fla., each accumulated 30 points for winning three laps. But Blackwelder got the gold because she won the last lap, Dunn, of Bloomington, Ind., had 19 points.

In wrestling, Baumgartner settled for the bronze in the 130-kilogramme (286-pound) class. The two-time Olympic and two-time world champion lost his first match 1-0 on a referee's decision to his Russian rival, Andre Shumilin.

Shumilin won a single point in regulation with a take-down, and after neither wrestler scored in overtime, the Russian was given the victory.

Shumilin was the last man to defeat Baumgartner — 23 matches ago in March 1993 at the World Cup.

"I'd much rather have a

gold, but it's fine," Baumgartner, 33, said. "It's better than no medal. I just wasn't executing the way I'm capable of. I had some opportunities I didn't take advantage of."

Shumilin went on to lose 1-0 on a referee's decision in the gold-medal match against Zaza Turmanidze of the former Soviet republic of Georgia. Baumgartner won the bronze medal by defeating Iran's Nader Ghanbari, 12-1, on a technical fall at 4:33.

Zeke Jones of the United States, silver medalist at the 1992 Olympics, won gold in the 52-kilogramme (114.5 pound) class. He beat Janali Khosrow of Iran, 11-0, on a technical fall at 4:53. Jones' gold was only the second for the United States, with the other going to Townsend Saunders Friday at 68-kgs (149.5 pounds).

In the 57-Kg (125.5-pound) division, Turkey's Ismail Zurnali won the gold by pinning Bagavdin Umakhanov of Russia at 2:25. Brad Pennington of the United States got the bronze, beating 1992 Olympic champion Alejandro Puerto Diaz of Cuba.

Russia dominated the wrestling with six gold and three silver, followed by the United States with two gold, three silver and three bronze. The world championships are in Istanbul, Turkey, in late August.

Bubka breaks pole vault record

SESTRIERE, Italy (AP) — Sergey Bubka took advantage of wind gusts which foiled other athletes to raise the world pole vault record another centimetre Sunday for his 35th world mark and a \$130,000 Ferrari.

The 30-year-old "flying Ukrainian" cleared 6.14 metres to break his own record set in Tokyo in 1992 and said afterwards he enjoyed "perfect record conditions."

"The wind was good, blowing in the proper direction. The track was perfect and altitude possibly helped," Bubka said.

Sunday's world record was the 17th outdoor mark by an athlete has made a fortune in bonuses in his 11-year career by hiking his own record by the centimetre.

His latest mark earned him a Ferrari, which was available to anyone at the meet who could break a record in the 2,035-metre altitude of this Alpine resort. The prize went unclaimed for the last five years.

A four-time world champion and an 1988 Olympic gold medalist, Bubka said he was recovering his form of 1991 — his best year ever.



WORLD BEST: Kenyan Moses Kiptanui best performance over the distance clocking 8min 9.01sec, beating Morocco's Khalid clocked on men's unofficial distance of two Shab's previous best 8:12.17 (AFP photo) miles late Saturday. Kiptanui ran a world's

Stoltenberg ousts Courier

TORONTO (R) — Australian Jason Stoltenberg reached his second successive tournament final with a 3-6 6-1 semifinal drubbing of fourth-seeded Jim Courier Saturday at the \$1.72 million Canadian Open.

The unseeded Stoltenberg next takes on eighth-seeded Andre Agassi, who beat him in their two previous encounters, in the final.

The 20th-ranked Agassi, a champion here in 1992, beat sixth-seeded Wayne Ferreira 6-4 7-5 to move into the final.

The 33rd-ranked Stoltenberg is red hot on this year's summer circuit.

Last week in Washington,

D.C., he lost in the finals to Stefan Edberg of Sweden.

Stoltenberg considers his spectacular one hour, 29 minute performance against the 12th-ranked Courier here a career highlight.

"I feel it is my best win," Stoltenberg said. "I know Courier isn't in the top 10 now, but I consider him a top ten player. It's nice to control a match against someone who has won four Grand Slam titles and has been number one."

Despite the semifinal loss, Courier will move back into the top 10 when the new rankings come out Monday.

"I don't have any regrets

about this match," said Courier, who has a 5-2 career match edge over Stoltenberg. "I did what I thought were the right things and it didn't work today."

Courier, who hasn't won a title since Indianapolis last August, was strong in the first set.

But the match turned dramatically in Stoltenberg's favour when he turned on the heat in the second set and Courier failed to handle the pressure.

In 440 matches going back to 1987, this was only the seventh time that Courier lost a set 6-0.

U.S., Croatia safe bets for 1-2; but who is vying for third at world basketball championships?

TORONTO (AP) — Major international basketball tournaments have become get-togethers where everyone is in the running to be runner-up.

The presence of NBA-flavoured U.S. "dream teams" have made the race for gold medals a foregone conclusion, but there's still silver and bronze at stake as well as the ever-present national pride. Next-to-last sounds so much better than last.

This week's world championships should run to the same form as the Barcelona Olympics, the first tourna-

ment with a U.S. team of NBA stars.

Croatia won the silver in Barcelona and featuring the likes of Toni Kukoc of the NBA's Chicago Bulls and Dino Radja of the Boston Celtics, it's a pretty safe bet for a second-place repeat behind the United States.

"The USA will win the gold, we'll take the silver and Canada the bronze," Kukoc said when asked to handicap the tournament that starts in Hamilton, Ontario and Toronto Thursday. "But we have to realise that in fact it will be very hard to achieve that. We have to play with

intensity in each game and give 100 per cent. I'm sure that we can do that."

Croatia was the only team to even remotely throw a scare into the United States at Barcelona and that was by being within 56-42 at half-time. It could have been even more of a threat this time, but the death of guard Drazen Petrovic of the NBA's New Jersey Nets last year affected the team as much off the court as on.

"I felt very alone when he died because we used to phone each other every day even when I was in Greece and he was in the United States," said Croatia centre Stojan Vrankovic, who played briefly with the Celtics. "I still think about him every day. It's very difficult even now."

Lithuania won the bronze at Barcelona, but did not qualify for the World Championships.

Kukoc could be right about Canada's chance at the bronze, depending on how well the players handle the pressure of playing in front of the home crowds. Russia, the only former Soviet republic to qualify for the 16-team field, and Puerto Rico, a team that has played together

for eight years, also have a solid chance at a medal.

Australia, Brazil and Germany all seemed to lose their shot at a medal with the loss of key players.

Australia, which will still have shooter Andrew Gaze who played briefly in the NBA, will be without 2.18-metre (7-foot-2) centre Luc Longley of the Bulls who decided to stay home for the birth of his child.

Seeing Brazil without Oscar Schmidt will be like seeing the Celtics without Larry Bird. Schmidt was the star of Brazilian teams since 1976 and he was the leading scorer at the last world championships and at Barcelona.

The 35-year-old forward never saw a shot he did not like and the rest of the team knew he and Marcel Sousa, who also retired after being the supporting star for 15 years, were the focus of the offence.

"We are trying to adopt a new pattern," new coach Ennio Vecchi said. "We don't want to have to depend on the individual talent of our players anymore."

Germany was a surprise winner of the European qual-

ifying tournament but all those hopes were dashed when Detlef Schrempf of the NBA's Seattle SuperSonics decided not to play in the world championships and 1.83-metre (6-foot-10) centre Christian Welp, who played for the NBA's Philadelphia 76ers, had to have shoulder surgery and will be out through the end of the summer.

As the desire to play on U.S. teams remains intense for the exposure, financial possibilities and professional pride, it seems more and more international stars have decided to skip these competitions, citing fatigue from NBA or European seasons.

Kukoc had to be coaxed to play for Croatia and Canada's Rick Fox, yet another Celtic in the tournament, did not make his commitment final until the summer.

Maybe playing for the silver and bronze is not the golden opportunity everyone makes it out to be.

"To take the gold looks impossible," first-year Croatia coach Giuseppe Giergia, "so we should be satisfied with the silver."

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O.J. SIMPSON Simpson witness described white men at murder scene

LOS ANGELES (R) — Details of a mystery witness in the O.J. Simpson case emerged Saturday as a grand jury transcript revealed Simpson allegedly spied on his ex-wife and a former boyfriend and watched them make love.

The Los Angeles Times said Saturday it had interviewed the mystery witness, who told the paper he was a burglar who was casing houses in Brentwood on the night of June 12, when Nicole Simpson and a friend, Ronald Goldman, were murdered.

The former football great has pleaded not guilty to the murders and maintains he was at home waiting for a limousine to take him to the airport when the slayings occurred.

Nicole, 35, and Goldman, 25, were stabbed and slashed to death outside Nicole's Brentwood townhouse.

The Times said the witness, whom it did not name, claimed to have noticed two burly, bearded white men dressed in dark clothing near Nicole's townhouse at about 9 p.m. June 12.

More than an hour later, as he was approaching a house across the street, the burglar said he heard a woman yell.

"I heard a commotion. Something was going on there, and I heard a lady's voice going, 'no,'" the witness told the Times.

He said he ducked behind a hedge and moments later saw the same two men he had spotted earlier running from the front of the townhouse.

The witness said he heard one of the men saying something about slicing or slashing a woman. He said the incident took place about 10:15 p.m. PDT. He said he did not see anyone in the area resembling O.J. Simpson.

The Times said the man, who lives hundreds of miles (kilometres) from Los Angeles in northern California, approached Simpson's defence team with his story before a reward was offered.

The witness said in the interview he did not want any money for his information.

"I feel sorry for Simpson. For me to take his money

would be like taking money from someone who's disabled. I don't care if they find him guilty or not. There's always two white guys who left that scene," the witness said.

Simpson's attorneys told the Times they found the man to be a credible witness despite his criminal past.

The paper said detectives also interviewed the witness Friday and took him to the scene of the crime.

A spokeswoman for the Los Angeles Police Department declined to comment on the Times' report Saturday.

Meanwhile, a transcript of grand jury hearings released at the close of court business Friday evening showed that one of the witnesses who testified before the panel, Nicole's former boyfriend, Keith Zlomowitch, said Simpson had told him he watched them making love.

"I watched you last night. I can't believe you would do that in the house. I watched you. I saw everything you did," Simpson allegedly said. Zlomowitch said the incident took place in 1992 when Nicole was estranged from her husband but not yet divorced.

He said Simpson walked into the condominium where Nicole then lived after he and Nicole had spent an intimate evening together.

Zlomowitch and Nicole were fully dressed and he was massaging Nicole's neck when Simpson entered uninvited and said, "I can't believe it. Look what you are doing. The kids are right out there by the pool."

Zlomowitch said he met Nicole in Aspen, Colorado, in January 1992 and began dating her in April that year when he moved to Los Angeles.

On the first date he said he invited Nicole and several friends to dinner at a Beverly Hills restaurant.

He said Simpson appeared out of nowhere, put his hands on the table and "sort of stared at myself and the other male individual at the table."

Then, according to Zlomowitch, Simpson said, "I'm O.J. Simpson and she's still my wife."

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Abu Shakra introduces new perfume

Director General of Abu Shakra Trading Agency Rami Abu Shakra Sunday introduced a new perfume from J. Del Pozo during a special conference held for this purpose.

The new perfume, "Duende," combines spiritual feelings and feminist senses. It is a combination of a collection of perfumes

which altogether make up a charming perfume full of secrets.

The perfume consists of essences derived from fruit and plants.

The new perfume will be on sale at pharmacies, perfume selling outlets, in addition to Abu Shakra stores.



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Simpson's attorneys told
Times they found the
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pite his criminal past.
he paper said detectives
interviewed the witness
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spokeswoman for the
Angeles Police Depart-
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Times' report Saturday.
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McRae ends bad run with New Zealand win

AUCKLAND (R) — Scots-
man Colin McRae put a bad
year behind him as he swept
to a convincing victory in the
Rally of New Zealand Sun-
day.

McRae, 25, dominated the
event in his Subaru Impreza,
bringing to the end a run
where he had suffered
crashes, car failure and a
disqualification while scoring
only one point in his six
previous rallies this year.

"Every driver has a bad
run every now and again," he
said. "This is the best way to
answer the critics."

The results of the rally
closed up the drivers' cham-
pionship race.

French Toyota driver
Didier Auriol, who finished
fifth in New Zealand, now
leads with 75 points from his
Finnish teammate Juha
Kankkunen and Spanish driver
Carlos Sainz, both on 72.
Kankkunen finished
second in New Zealand,
admitting that McRae had
just been too fast to catch.
Sainz was eliminated on the
first day when the engine
failed on his Subaru.

McRae, son of five-times

British champion Jimmy
McRae, led from the first
afternoon of the three-day
event and raced along New
Zealand's smooth gravel
roads to win by two minutes
14 seconds.

He was not only fast but
also consistent. The Scot was
the only front-runner who did
not have at least one spin,
and his blue car was un-
marked at the end.

"I was never flat out," he
said.

It was his second world
championship victory, the
first also coming in New Zea-
land last year.

"This was just as difficult,
but in a different way. Last
year I had to go flat out to
keep in front, but this year I
had to back off and then it's
hard to keep your concentra-
tion up."

The Mitsubishi team had
one of its best results, Ger-
man Armin Schwarz finishing
third ahead of Swedish team-
mate Kenneth Eriksson, who
increased his lead in the Asia-
Pacific championship with his
fourth placing.

Auriol had held second at
the halfway stage but drop-

ped back on day two after a
crash and problems with both
his gearbox and his front
differential.

The only change to the
overnight placings among the
leading contenders on the
short final day came when
Finn Ari Vatanen, going flat
out in his Fort Escort Cos-
worth trying to catch Schwarz
for third, ran into a gully just
before a fast corner.

The car took off, flew
across the road and hit a tree
at an estimated 160 kmh (100
mph), but Vatanen and Ita-
lian co-driver Fabrizio Pons
were unharmd. "I made an
error. It was a big tree,"
Vatanen said.

New Zealand champion
Joe McAndrew finished sixth
in his private Subaru Legacy,
ahead of Toyota driver
Yoshio Fujimoto of Japan.
Australian Ed Ordynski won
the Group N category for
near-standard cars and
finished ninth overall in his
Mitsubishi Lancer.

Toyota retained its lead in
the manufacturers' cham-
pionship, although narrowed
the gap to 13 points.

HOCKENHEIM, Germany
(R) — Austrian Gerhard
Berger won a dramatic and
explosive German Grand
Prix Sunday and delivered
Ferrari's first victory since
1990.

Berger triumphed comfort-
ably by more than 54 seconds
ahead of Frenchman Olivier
Panis in a Ligier at the end of
a race marred by a crash and
a fire which ended with
Dutchman Jos Verstappen
and three Benetton mecha-
nics being flown to hospital
with burns.

This was not the only in-
cident to overshadow the race
as virtually half of the 26-car
field were wiped out on the
first lap alone.

Two major accidents, one
on the grid and one on the
first corner, reduced the field
from 26 to 13 by the end of
lap one, although both Wil-
liams cars returned by the
end of lap three.

Berger's win was made
easy when the championship-
leading German driver
Michael Schumacher was
forced to retire after chasing
him in second place for 20
laps.

Verstappen was the victim
of a spectacular fuel-ignited
flash fire after 15 laps of the
45-lap race.

The fire erupted in the pit
lane outside the Benetton
garage but was extinguished
within seconds by the prompt
use of powder-filled fire ex-
tinguishers.

Verstappen, however, and
four of the Benetton team
mechanics were treated for
burns at the circuit's medical
centre. Then the Dutchman
and three of the other victims
had to be taken by helicopter
to hospital for further treat-
ment.

Schumacher, driving under
appeal against a two-race ban

and six-point penalty, was hit
by a blown engine on his
Benetton on a bleak day for
the team.

Berger's win was the ninth
of his career and his first
since he won the Australian
Grand Prix in a McLaren in
November 1992.

He was followed home by
the two Ligiers — the team
recently purchased by Benet-
ton — driven by Frenchmen
Olivier Panis and Eric Ber-
nard.

The points scored by Ligier
were their first of the season
and the first of Panis' career.

Christian Fittipaldi of Bra-
zil driving a Footwork came
in fourth, Gianni Morbidelli
of Italy, also in a Footwork,
fifth and Frenchman Erik
Comas in a Larrousse sixth.

The race, which began in
31 degrees Celsius heat and
an intimidating atmosphere
with fire-crackers and loud
chants from the vast crowd,
was dramatic from start to
finish.

Italian driver Alessandro
Zanardi, in a Lotus, was in a
collision with compatriot
Andrea de Cesaris's Sauber,
after de Cesaris himself had
been hit from behind by
another car.

This triggered a multi-car
crash and another collision
in which it appeared that Bri-
tains Martin Brundle and
Johnny Herbert, in a
McLaren and Lotus respec-
tively, were involved.

Both Minardis, driven by
Italians Michele Alboreto
and Pierluigi Martini, were
also eliminated in the crash
on the grid.

Another accident at the
first corner involving Fin-
land's Mika Hakkinen, who
seemed to drive into the rear
of Briton Damon Hill's Wil-
liams, involved David Coul-
thard of Britain in the second

Williams, German Heinz-
Harald Frentzen, in the
second Sauber, and Mark
Blundell of Britain in a Tyr-
rell.

The race was not stopped,
nor was a safety car sent out to
slow down the pace after
either crash. Race officials
said it was unnecessary as
there was no debris on the
track and all the cars that
came off did so at safe places.

Both Jordans driven by
Briton Eddie Irvine and
Brazilian Rubens Barrichello
were also eliminated at the
first corner to the Hakkinen
collision which also affected
Frenchman Jean Alesi in a
Ferrari.

Alesi retired after cruising
to a halt on the straight lead-
ing to the first chicane, leav-
ing Berger to defend his and
Ferrari's lead from Schu-
macher.

The pair battled through-
out the opening laps sepa-
rated by less than a second
before Schumacher pitted on
lap 12.

When the German re-
turned he soon caught up
again to take second place
but his engine expired after
19 laps, giving Berger a com-
fortable run home.

Ferrari's victory enabled
them to draw level with
McLaren in the record books
as the two most successful
teams in the history of For-
mula One with 104 wins each.

Berger, who abandoned
his car in the stadium com-

plex in front of most of the
150,000 capacity crowd, was
delighted with his and the
Ferrari team's drought-
ending victory.

"I am so happy," he said
after his tumultuous recep-
tion on the victory's podium,
the crowd having warmed to
him after being unable to
celebrate a home win by their
hero Schumacher.

"It was a great day for me
and for the team, a really
great performance. I feel so
happy for the team and
everyone involved because of
the hard work we have all
done in the last year and a
half."

"I am delighted too for
Jean Todt, our team mana-
ger, because he has worked
very hard doing a brilliant job
to motivate and organise the
team."

Todt, the Frenchman who
left the Peugeot sportscar
team to join Ferrari a year
ago, phoned Ferrari Presi-
dent Luca di Montezemolo
with the news at the end of
the race before being
embraced by Berger.

Berger admitted he was
worried when Schumacher
was close behind him early in
the race and relieved to see
him retired, giving him a
comfortable run to the che-
quered flag.

"Now we have to hope we
can improve the car again as
much as we have so that we
can be really competitive on
all other sorts of circuits," he
said.

IAAF calls for all documents on Harris

ST PETERSBURG (R) —
The International Amateur
Athletic Federation (IAAF)
urged the U.S. governing
body Saturday to send im-
mediately all its documents
on banned hurdler Danny
Harris to the federation's
headquarters in Monte Car-
lo.

Earlier U.S.A. Track and
Field (U.S.A.T.F.) President
Larry Ellis said the American
body was considering legal
action to get the drugs ban on
Harris lifted before the end
of the northern season.

Harris, the 1984 Olympic
400 metres hurdles silver
medallist, was banned for
four years in 1992 after test-
ing positive for cocaine.

He was reinstated by the
American governing body
U.S.A.T.F. last year and ran
in four European meetings
this season.

However, the IAAF ban-
ned him from the London
Grand Prix July 15, saying

only its council had the power
to reinstate banned athletes.
The next council meeting is
not scheduled until Novem-
ber.

IAAF spokesman Chris-
topher Winner told Reuters
that to his knowledge the
federation had not received
any communication from
U.S.A.T.F. or from Harris's
coach Bob Kersee.

"If Larry Ellis and
U.S.A.T.F. feel so deeply
and so strongly about Danny
Harris then it's incumbent for
them to send the documents
to the IAAF," Winner said.
"Action is what's required

now, not more talk."

Ellis told reporters at the
Goodwill Games that legal
action was now a possibility.

"We are going to have our
lawyers try to explore the
possibility of trying to expe-
dite this before November,"
he said.

"Sometimes when you are
dealing with the IAAF you
should go there with a good
lawyer."

Ellis said reinstating Har-
ris would be a signal from
the IAAF that he had achieved
something worthwhile in
breaking his dependency on
cocaine.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Rival gang kills Algerian Islamic leader

ALGIERS (AFP) — A rival armed Muslim fundamentalist group has killed a leader of the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), Abdul Kader Hattab, with his wife and nine of his aides, Algerian security officials announced Sunday. The bodies of Hattab, known as Mouloud, and the 10 others were found buried in a cave at Djebel Bouzegza, near Algiers, the officials said. According to the authorities, the 11 members of the GIA, one of the most hardline of the Islamic guerrilla movements waging a war on the Algerian security forces, were slain by a rival gang led by Said Makhloufi. Last year, the GIA began targeting expatriate workers and residents it accused of collaborating with the regime. Extremists began their bloody campaign, which has claimed more than 3,000 lives, after the army intervened in January 1992 to bring about the cancellation of the second round of a general election the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) was poised to win. The FIS was outlawed later in the year.

Iran to hand over Azeri refugee camps to Baku

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran is to hand over the administration of Azeri refugee camps built by Tehran in southern Azerbaijan to the Baku government, the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) said Sunday. IRCS chief Seifollah Vahid-Dastjerdi, quoted by the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) said the supervision of all nine camps situated near the border with Iran would be transferred within six months. The camps were built at the request of Baku in 1993 to help shelter hundreds of thousands of Azeris displaced from the war with the Armenians over the Nagorno-Karabakh enclave. The Iranian-administered camps sheltered around 50,000 refugees, who came from war-stricken areas in southwestern Azerbaijan. Mr. Vahid-Dastjerdi added that the transfer would take place under the supervision of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Earthquake rocks southwest Iran

TEHRAN (AFP) — An earthquake measuring 5.3 on the Richter scale hit regions in southwestern Iran on Sunday, Tehran Radio reported. There were no immediate reports of casualties or damage from the tremor which struck Andimeshk and Badreh region near the town of Bam. Some 50 earth tremors have been registered throughout Iran in the last two months. A quake measuring five can cause considerable damage.

U.S. Navy firefighters put out tugboat fire

BAHRAIN (AP) — Firefighters from the U.S. Navy destroyer USS Paul F. Foster put out an engine-room blaze aboard a commercial tugboat Sunday, the navy reported. The destroyer responded to the 3 a.m. (1200 GMT) distress call of the Glorious City, a tugboat that flies the Honduran flag, and dispatched a rescue and assistance team. The team extinguished the blaze at approximately 5:54 a.m. (0254 GMT), according to a navy statement. There were no injuries to the tugboat crew. A member of the rescue team from the Paul F. Foster, homeported in San Diego, sustained minor dehydration during the firefighting efforts, but has returned to normal duties, the statement added.

Turkey hits U.N. resolution on Cyprus

ISTANBUL (R) — Turkey has criticised the U.N. Security Council's latest resolution on Cyprus, saying it did not place enough emphasis on confidence-building measures and showed signs of bias. "It put the emphasis on elements of an extensive solution ahead of an agreement on the confidence measures," Turkey's Foreign Ministry spokesman Ferhat Ataman said in a written statement on Saturday. He also said that the resolution "does not fully and impartially reflect the positive developments explained in the secretary general's report." Mr. Ataman said Ankara had welcomed a June report by the Secretary-General Boutros Ghali to the council, explaining the Turkish approach towards measures to ease negotiations on reuniting the island under a federal system. The Security Council adopted a resolution on Friday asking Dr. Ghali to undertake a "fundamental and far-reaching reflection" on ways of resolving the Cyprus problem and to report back by the end of October.

Iran opens blood processing centre

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iranian President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani opened a blood processing centre here on Sunday, said to be the largest in the Middle East, Tehran Radio reported. The centre can process up to 80,000 liters of blood for production of blood derivatives, the radio said. The target was to end Iran's dependency on blood imports. Mr. Rafsanjani told the radio that the centre was "politically and economically important, given the spread of AIDS in foreign countries. A blood refinery is no less important than an oil refinery. Out of the 280 cases of AIDS in Iran, 200 caught the disease through transfusion of imported blood." The first AIDS case recorded in Iran was that of a baby infected by the transfusion of imported blood, according to the health ministry.

Kuwait advises fuel workers to pray

KUWAIT (R) — The Islamic Affairs Ministry has urged Muslim workers at Kuwait petrol stations not to miss their Friday prayers at mosques even if that means temporarily closing the station, a newspaper reported on Sunday. "Workers obligated (by being Muslims) to perform the Friday prayer should stop working and rush upon the prayer call (to the nearest mosque)," the newspaper Al-Sayassah said, quoting a ministry statement. It said a station should close for the duration of the prayer if all workers there were Muslims and all wished to pray. The ministry's directive was interpreted as a guidance and is not binding on state-owned Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNUPC), which owns the emirate's petrol stations. In Kuwait there is no legal requirement for shops, offices or other workplaces to close for prayer or other religious duties. Such decisions are up to the local person in charge. In neighbouring Saudi Arabia and Iran religious police ensure workplaces close for Muslim prayers.

Kuwait plans centre to treat drug addicts

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait plans to open a specialised centre for the treatment of drug addicts next year, a newspaper on Sunday reported a health official as saying. Abdul Rahman Al Asfour, director of the emirate's psychiatric hospital, said the long-planned health ministry centre for the treatment of narcotic addiction would be attached to the hospital. The English-language Arab Times reported. Its construction was delayed because of Iraq's 1990-91 occupation, he was reported as saying. The hospital was also studying the possibility of establishing a network of half-way houses where addicts could be rehabilitated into society following treatment, he was reported as saying. The health ministry had recently signed a contract for the construction of a second psychiatric hospital, he added.

U.N. probe attacked in Somalia

MOGADISHU (AP) — U.N. officials flew Sunday to a western border town to find out what happened to a company of Zimbabwean peacekeepers attacked by a Somali militia. U.N. spokesman George Bennett said agency officials in Mogadishu had not established contact with about 130 Zimbabweans since the attack Saturday by militiamen of the Habre Gedir sub-clan loyal to warlord Mohammed Farrah Aidid. Unconfirmed reports said the militiamen looted the contingent's personal aid military supplies, including vehicles. There were no reports of injuries.

Israeli Arabs stage protest

Israeli security forces arrest an Israeli Arab youth during a protest staged by Israeli Arabs in front of the prime minister's office on Sunday. The demonstration was in protest against the government's discriminatory policies against Israeli Arab villages and towns which are denied funds for development and infrastructure. Since the creation of the Jewish state in 1948, Israeli Arabs have been complaining about systematic discrimination against them. About 800,000 Arabs are Israeli citizens (AFP photo)



Al Nahar closes under PLO ban

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — One of the two daily newspapers serving Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza closed on Sunday, three days after the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) banned its distribution in self-rule areas under controversial circumstances.

Mustafa Al Sawwaf, a journalist at Al Nahar newspaper, said editor Othman Al Hallak froze publication of the newspaper and put staff on unpaid leave until further notice. The paper's Jerusalem headquarters were locked on Sunday afternoon. Al Nahar, founded in 1985, has followed an openly pro-Jordanian line in its coverage of the Middle East conflict. This is now particularly sensitive after last week's agreement between Jordan and Israel, which angered the PLO.

The Palestinian National Authority (PNA) banned circulation of the newspaper in Gaza and Jericho on Thursday, saying it had failed to register with the new self-rule authorities.

Palestinian journalists have protested the banning which

PLO leader Yasser Arafat maintained had nothing to do with politics.

Staff at Al Nahar in Jerusalem reported for work and began preparing Monday's edition, but by midday the management decided to back down.

"We will not open until we have an assurance from the Palestinian authority in Gaza that our newspaper will be distributed in the West Bank and Gaza Strip as normal," a manager said.

No one at the newspaper from the owner down was prepared to be quoted for fear of further provoking the authority in its first clampdown on a free press.

"They can do whatever they want to us, we have no protection at all," one journalist admitted.

Mr. Arafat ordered the closure after all copies were seized at the entry point into the Gaza Strip on Thursday.

The newspaper was accused of adopting a line "harmful to Palestinian national interests" and not having an operating licence from the new authority.

A spokesman for Mr. Arafat said Sunday: "Nothing has changed."

Israel's Deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin criticised the closure. "Mr. Arafat's decision to close Al Nahar is an unhealthy sign that the Palestinian authority is following a non-democratic path and an unhealthy path for the remainder of the peace process with Israel," he said.

Mr. Arafat's mainstream PLO movement Fatah issued a strongly-worded statement against Al Nahar and a pro-Jordanian weekly, Akbar Al Balad, whose owner decided to close down on Friday before being closed down by the authority.

Leading Palestinian journalists signed a petition demanding the right to free expression and an end to the closures.

"Irrespective of the political affiliation of the paper and whatever allegiances it has, we feel that the action against them is a direct violation of the freedom of expression and publication," they said.

"It is also contrary to the democratic basis that we hope to build for our society."

They called on the authority "to take active steps to stop the repeat of these ac-

tions and to guarantee the rights of journalists and their institutions, not to hurt them physically or morally, not to threaten them or to attempt to deny them their sources of living."

In the two months since Palestinian self-rule started, journalists have complained of harassment, and the authority has harshly attacked critical newspapers.

But the banning of Al Nahar was the first major action against media freedom under Palestinian control.

The Paris-based press group Reporters Without Borders criticised the ban on Friday.

"Raising the problem of Al Nahar as though it were a crime against democracy is just a lie. The (proper) basis is to have a licence to publish the newspaper," a PLO official quoted Mr. Arafat as telling a delegation of Gazans late on Saturday.

But Marwan Abu Zafar, managing editor of the remaining daily newspaper Al Quds, said the Palestinian authority had not set up any system of registering publications.

PLO names officers for border crossings

GAZA (Agencies) — The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) has appointed police officers who next week will start liaising with Israel at the borders of the Palestinian self-rule areas with Jordan and Egypt, a senior Palestinian official has said.

Control of border crossings was one of the most hotly disputed issues during Israeli-PLO negotiations on self-rule, which was launched finally in May. Israel eventually accepted a Palestinian presence while it retained overall control.

Chief Palestinian negotiator Nabil Shaath said in an interview late on Saturday that Major Nazmi Mohanna would be the chief Palestinian officer at Gaza's Rafah checkpoint with Egypt.

Major Fawzi Odeh was appointed to the King Hussein Bridge crossing between the Jericho self-rule enclave and Jordan.

Dr. Shaath said the men would begin their work next week.

The Palestinian officers will serve as deputies to the Israeli commanders of the two crossing points, alongside two other Israeli deputy commanders.

Israel will still monitor everyone arriving and leaving, watching a Palestinian police checkpoint through one-way glass. But Palestinian officers will stand alongside Israeli officers as they question and search Palestinians.

The Palestinian National Authority (PNA) will soon collect taxes from Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and Jericho, an official said Sunday.

Mr. Tayeb Abdul Rahman, a PNA official, told the Associated Press that the 19-member cabinet set up a tax collection authority at its weekly Saturday meeting in Gaza City.

"We will start collecting taxes from Palestinian businessmen," Mr. Abdul Rahman said.

The authority will be headed by Jamil Tarifi, the Palestinian minister for civil affairs, who is also in charge of coordinating with Israel.

Israel handed over Gaza and Jericho to Palestinian self-rule in May. Since then, Israeli officials have urged the Palestinians to set up a tax collection system to facilitate governance.

Mr. Abdul Rahman said the authority's first task would be to ask Palestinian businessmen to report all purchases from Israel since the autonomy began in May, so it could get value added tax back from the Israelis.

He said taxation levels would be worked out between the Palestinian finance ministry and business leaders.

"The Palestinian authority will also ask every businessman to submit a report on Israeli products he imported since May 17 to enable the authority to ask the Israeli government for VAT taxes paid by them," Mr. Abdul Rahman said.

Mr. Abdul Rahman said Israel imposed high taxes on businessmen in the West Bank and Gaza. The economic accord signed between the two sides in Paris in April allows the Palestinian authority to levy taxes from businessmen. "The amount of taxes will be determined by the finance ministry and businessmen at a later date," Mr. Abdul Rahman said.

New doubt cast on N. Korean premier

SEOUL (Agencies) — North Korean Premier Kang Song San was not at the funeral of a vice premier, official media reported Sunday, reviving doubts over his position in the Stalinist state after the recent defection of a man claiming to be his son-in-law.

Mr. Kang's name was not on the list of North Korean officials present for Saturday's state funeral. The list was carried in a Pyongyang radio report monitored Sunday by the Naewoo Press, a Seoul monitoring agency.

On Friday, just one day before the funeral, Mr. Kang appeared in public to pay respects at the bier of Kang Hui Won, who died after an unspecified long illness at the age of 73, according to North Korean media. Mr. Kang was also named to head the funeral committee.

This had earlier led North Korea watchers in the South to believe that the premier had retained his powers. The Pyongyang Radio did not give reasons for his absence and officials at Naewoo said they were not sure whether it meant Mr. Kang had fallen from power.

Small changes such as funeral arrangements for important officials often provide glimpses into power shifts in the isolated communist state.

Kang Myong Do, 35, who defected to the South in May through a third country, told a news conference Wednesday that he was Premier Kang's son-in-law. The North has denied the claim.

He also said North Korea has already built five nuclear bombs and is planning to build five more. He was the first reported member of the North's inner circle to claim the existence of nuclear bombs.

South Korean officials seem convinced of his identity, but they and Western officials have expressed doubt about the reliability of his information, which he said he received through conversations with the intelligence chief responsible for the North's main nuclear

complex in Yongbyon.

Premier Kang and the late vice-premier are both distant relatives of late North Korean leader Kim Il Sung on his mother's side. Kim died July 8 of reported heart failure at age 82.

Also Sunday, North Korea heaped criticism of rival South Korea for trying to punish Pak Bo-Hi, a U.S.-based South Korean newspaper publisher, after he made a trip to the communist state for Kim's funeral.

The Seoul government pressured the national daily Segye Times published in Seoul to replace Mr. Pak as its publisher last week, saying he was unqualified for the post. Government prosecutors have threatened to arrest him if he returns to South Korea.

"The threat ... is a crude violation of humanism and an impudent challenge to universal ethics and morality. It can never be pardoned," the North's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said Sunday, quoting a commentary in the official Rodong Sinmun newspaper.

South Korea has denied that its action was retribution. It said Mr. Pak, a U.S. permanent resident, violated South Korean laws which forbid foreign residents to become publishers.

During his 11-day trip to North Korea, Mr. Pak attended Kim's funeral and met with his son and designated heir, Kim Jong-il. Seoul had warned that any South Korean citizen who offered condolences would face punishment under national security laws that ban pro-North Korean activities.

Mr. Pak is currently in the United States. He also serves as chairman of the Washington D.C.-based daily Washington Times. Both it and the Sebye Times are owned by the Unification Church.

Kim Il-Sung is reviled in the South for starting the bloody 1950-1953 Korean war, which left 2.5 million people killed in both Koreas.

Palestinian authority faces challenges of laws, human rights

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — The Palestinian National Authority (PNA) in charge of self-rule faces a daunting challenge in drawing up a coherent set of laws for Gaza and Jericho to protect human rights.

"The new authority in Gaza and Jericho faces a task which is unprecedented in its complexity," said Hanan Ashrawi, the Palestinian commissioner for human rights and former spokeswoman in peace talks with Israel.

"They have to lay down the bases of a future state without having the powers, in a society that has been traumatised by 26 years of Israeli military occupation and violence."

First the authority will have to untangle a web of different laws.

"We need to have the rule of law. But which law? The law is not the same in Jericho and Gaza," Dr. Ashrawi explained to AFP.

In Jericho on the West Bank, which was administered by Jordan before Israel seized the territory in 1967, old Jordanian laws still applied although they had been modified in Jordan itself.

Gaza has Palestinian legislation dating back to 1962, when it was under Egyptian control, together with military edicts issued by the Palestine Liberation Army (PLA) in Lebanon in 1978.

The PLA forms the backbone of the new Palestinian police force which has taken over from the Israeli military in the self-rule areas.

"It's impossible to say like Abu Ammar (PLO leader Yasser Arafat) that we go back to pre-1967. The facts have changed completely," said Dr. Ashrawi.

"We need quick action by legal brains to unify the law and a legal body appointed by the national authority," she said, noting that the autonomy accord allowed

Israel to block new laws.

Dr. Ashrawi, who turned down calls to join the new leadership in favour of leading a human rights commission, said a new legal system should come before elections, which have been delayed and are now not due until December.

The treatment of detainees is also a worry for groups concerned with the human rights situation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip that number at least 20.

Officially, the number of inmates is low: 50 prisoners held "for security reasons" and around 100 others for common law crimes, out of 900,000 residents in the autonomous areas.

But the death of Farid Jarub in early July after police interrogation set alarm bells ringing.

The man accused of collaborating with the Israelis died after having been beaten up and left without medical attention, according to family and friends.

Ghazi Diab, a critic of the autonomy deal with Israel, accused the new leadership of "inheriting the methods of the Israeli army."

"Prisoners are beaten up, deprived of the services of a lawyer, locked up for hours with a hood over their heads," said the member of the Popular Front for Liberation of Palestine who spent more than 16 years in Israeli jails.

He complained of police brutality towards lawyers as well as over the spread of different branches of the police and military services.

Cases such as the death of Farid Jarub "raise the question of legal measures. They are a test of the behaviour of the authorities," said Dr. Ashrawi.

She noted Mr. Arafat had vowed to help protect the human rights of detainees and ordered a thorough investigation, which has so far resulted in the arrest of three policemen in connection with the Jarub case.

COLUMN

Watergate downs another president

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The Watergate Hotel saw the downfall of another U.S. president Saturday, but this time the victim was quickly back on his feet. President Bill Clinton took a tumble outside the Watergate complex as he went on his customary early morning jog. Mr. Clinton's red cap went flying and he slightly injured his left knee and right elbow before aides helped him back on to his feet to complete his run. The Watergate apartment complex was where employees of President Richard Nixon's reelection campaign broke into the Democratic Party National Headquarters in June, 1972. That incident eventually forced Mr. Nixon to resign in disgrace two years later.

Diana's health files stolen

LONDON (R) — Intimate files about Princess Diana's physical and mental health during her failed marriage to Prince Charles have been stolen from the office of her private therapist, British newspapers reported Sunday. The confidential records, which could document Princess Diana's alleged suicidal tendencies and her battle with the eating disorder Bulimia, would cause deep embarrassment if they were made public, said the reports in two tabloids. The loss of the sensitive computer files would mark another serious breach of privacy for the royal family, whose mystique has been torn to shreds by telephone bugging and long-lens photo snooping. British police confirmed they were investigating a burglary at consulting rooms in Harley Street where the royal therapist Roderick Lane is based.

A bad day for overseas worker

MANILA (AP) — Narciso Daput had a bad day, a very bad day. Mr. Daput returned to the Philippines after completing 10 years of work in Saudi Arabia, and things started to go wrong. First, he lost his luggage and souvenirs he had brought home from the Middle East. Then, on the way out of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport, robbers held him up, taking the money he saved from his overseas job. He decided he needed a drink, but ended up getting so drunk that he started chasing people with a club. Soon a mob was after him. So he ducked into a nearby house, where he armed himself with a kitchen knife and grabbed an 11-year-old boy to keep people from coming near him. That started an 11-hour hostage drama that ended at the Manila domestic airport, where he tried to get on a plane to his home province of Capiz in the central Philippines. Police arrested him before he could get on the plane. Mr. Daput's misfortunes were carried by local radio stations, which urged airport authorities help him. An investigation was conducted, but Mr. Daput failed to file a complaint about his missing luggage and the robbery. The radio reports said the boy's parents decided not to file charges against Mr. Daput.

Jefferson portrait stolen

BOSTON, Massachusetts (AFP) — The earliest known portrait of the third U.S. president, Thomas Jefferson, valued at half a million dollars, has been stolen from a studio here. The 1786 portrait of one of the founding fathers of the United States had been sent to a studio here for reproduction, police said.

Toddler puts car in gear, plows into 5 children

LOS ANGELES (R) — A two-year-old, left momentarily in a car with its engine running, Saturday put the vehicle in gear and ploughed into five children in Los Angeles, seriously injuring four of them, officials said. Two 10-year-old girls who were crushed under the car suffered head and chest injuries and were airlifted to children's hospital.